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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

AFTER a stay of three years in England, I set out on a return journey home with a band of friends and compatriots. This was in August 1940, and the long sea voyage round the Cape gave us time for all the thoughts which filled our minds at the prospect of seeing Burma again after three and four years abroad. Besides our excitement at the approach of family reunions and the delights of once again eating Burmese food, we wondered whether the events in the outside world during the past few years, and the outbreak of the European war, had filled our people with interest, excitement or alarm for international events.

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Before I left Burma I had been a student among companions who had only a passing interest in affairs outside Burma, so filled had our minds been with separation from India in 1936, the general elections for the first House of Representatives in Burma's history, the formation of the first Ministry under Dr. Ba Maw, student strikes for the amendment of the University Act, and the fervid chastising campaigns on the part of monks and fanatic students for the wearing of thick homespun by women instead of the scandalously transparent imported muslins. The older people at home also turned their eyes along the same channels. Of Hitler and Mussolini our aunts had heard, as of caricatured figures on a distant screen, and Ba Maw's admiration of Hitler's position of power was obscured by his eccentric passion for gorgeous attire, which was much more in the public eye.

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The letters which I received from friends in Burma during my three years in England had also been too full of the Indian-Burman riots which raged violently in 1938, the industrial strikes in the oilfields, and the repeated school and university strikes which added to the general domestic unrest of those years, to tell me much else. But since then we had read of the opening of the Burma Road as an event of world interest; later we had read with feelings of surprise, amusement and expectancy of the face-slapping, debagging and stuffing of passports into the mouth to which the Japanese had subjected Englishmen in the ports of China, as something new and startling in our time; and later still, the closing of the Burma Road at the insistence of the Japanese Government made us suddenly connect the European politics which so excited our English friends with the events in places which surrounded Burma, though not

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yet with Burma itself. Brought up as a complacent child of a government officer in Burma, this was the first time that I realized how we had unconsciously thought of England, the British Empire, as a permanent world force during our lifetime—a force with which we might bargain advantageously or without success, but one that our fathers and we had taken for granted for all the time that we could remember. But now we realized it as one power—leading perhaps—amongst other powers in the West, and we realized also the existence of Japan and remembered how the Burmans who visited it always brought back stories of the beauty, progress and good manners of the country.

We left our English friends in the first half of August 1940, as they waited, braced for an invasion, to go to what they and we considered a war-free country. I was in the Ladies Room of a big restaurant in London just before I left, when the attendant who watched me wrap my longyi asked me which country I came from. "Burma," I told her. "Burma," she repeated uncertainly. "Is there a war there, Miss?" "No," I said laughing, "but there is a Road there." Yet I was only amusing myself. As we set out home, the furthest that our thoughts of war and Burma ranged, was to wonder whether the Burma Road and the recent closing of it had made people think more about Japan and China than they had done in 1937, when the outbreak of war between the two countries had caused little excitement except that some of my friends became consistent boycotters of Japanese goods. We also wondered vaguely whether trade had been affected, and whether thought and general social conditions had been stimulated with the world-shattering event of a European war, not dreaming that this was but the splash of a pebble compared to the tempest that was to follow.

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Since I had left Burma, my mother and brother and sisters had settled themselves in Rangoon and I wondered how the city would seem after the big cities of the West. Rangoon is not one of the ancient cities of Burma. Its present position in the life of the country and people is a complete turnabout from its traditional place, for in days gone by it had attracted the inhabitants through spiritual rather than material renown. While Pagan, Ava, Toungoo and Mandalay rose and fell in political and commercial importance, Rangoon—Dagon as it was called—continued unchangingly a seat of pilgrimage, connected with fable and divinity, forming an actual link with another world cycle that existed in the universe before this present arrangement of Mount Myinmo, with its surrounding heavenly, earthly and hellish regions, was formed.

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For it was on the hill called Theinguttara, which now casts its shadow on the city of Rangoon with its crown of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, that the omens for the spiritual life of this world cycle were manifested, before

As yet they have not begun to demand an equal share of education with the boys, and the only accomplishments most Burmese girls know are how to dress neatly, do up their hair, and powder their faces. This is the single open implication of their inferiority—except in worship at the pagoda, when every woman will pray that in another existence she may be a man—and it is not likely that female education will make much progress for another generation, the popular idea in Burma being that learning is no use to a girl when she has it, and she may, consequently, as well devote all her spare time to making herself look as pretty as possible. Here and there are a few who are deeply learned in Burmese literature. The young wife of one of the most prominent living Burman pleaders in Rangoon has as good a knowledge of the sacred books and as great a fluency in repeating Pali rituals as any pōngyi in the country. But the great majority of girls only know what they pick up from the conversation of their brothers and the men who come about the house. It is therefore greatly to their credit that they manage not only house affairs, but their husband's business into the bargain. A farmer's wife will carry out the sale of the whole rice crop to the agent of an English rice firm in her husband's absence, and generally strikes a better bargain than he would have made himself. If the village head constable is away, the wife will get together the policemen, stop a fight, arrest the offenders, and send them off to the lock-up all on her own responsibility. The wife sits by, no matter what public business is being transacted, and very often puts in her own opinion quite as a matter of course; in fact, she is virtual master of the house, and henpecked husbands are not by any means uncommon. The last king of Burma, Thibaw Min, was a notable instance. There never was a king of Burma before who remained for three years the husband of one wife. It was not inclination in his case. He had quite a number of *amourettes*; but the sturdy Supayā Lat and her formidable mother soon got the offending damsels out of the way. There is also little doubt that it was Supayā Lat and her mother who suggested the massacre of the Princes and prompted the defiance of the British Government, which brought about the ending of the Burmese monarchy.

¹ [i.e., girls--ANALYST]

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A junior might lawfully copy a senior even in what is wrong; whereas no example could be any valid excuse for a wrong act.

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Subsequent permission might cover an act; whereas the Wini required prior permission.

The restrictions against indulgences were to be in force only in the monasteries; and not for those who might be sojourning in villages.

These points, after lengthy discussion, were all given against the dissenters, and degradation was awarded them as a punishment.

Still matters got worse, and in 241 B.C. the great king Athawka, of Pataliputra, brought about the third and last great Council to cleanse the Church. After nine months' public reading of the Book of Rules and of the most excellent Law, 60,000 heretics were expelled from the Church, and it was resolved to propagate the religion far and wide. This last decision was fraught with the most momentous consequences to Burma, for among the missionaries sent north, south, east, and west from Behar were the two, Thawna and Öttara, who proceeded to the country of Suvarna Bhumi, the "Golden Land," and landing at Thatôn, now north of Maulmein, but then on the sea-coast, proceeded to disseminate the Buddhist doctrines amongst the tribes in the great river-valleys of the country. It is important to notice that the doctrines they brought with them had just been revised and confirmed by a great Council of the Church. Since then, throughout all Burma, the old geniolatry has been displaced by the teachings of the Buddha. The regulations, introduced then in their first purity, have been retained ever since practically unchanged, so that at the present time Buddhism exists in Burma in a form much nearer to that which Shin Gautama taught than is found in any country where the Three Precious Things are held in reverence.

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The only sect which has at any time started any doctrinal heresy is that of the 'Paramats. They reject the worship before pagodas and images, and pray only to the Nyan-daw, the godlike wisdom, which abides like a mountain of fire in the heavens, invisible to mortal eyes, and taking no interest and exercising no influence over mundane things. These

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dissenters pay reverence to the ordinary brethren of the yellow robe, keep the Ten Precepts, repeat the Bawana (Payā, Tayā, Thengā, etc.) and the Ittipi-thaw, but they never go near the shrines, and recite their prayers and invocations in the jungle or in open fields. It is a kind of reminiscence of fire-worship, an ancestral adoration of the heavens in the sun, caused possibly by a shrinking from the suspicion of idolatry. A cardinal fault in them is that they give no alms, for most religions are at one on the question that charity covers a multitude of sins. The sect was founded at the beginning of this century by a pōngyi, called by his followers Shin Tabaung. He lived at Sinbyugyun, "White Elephant Island," a place half-way between Mandalay and the British frontier, and the dissent would probably never have spread beyond that district, or outlived the life of its originator, had it not been for the king Bodaw Payā. When the Thenga refused to recognise his claim to be the fifth Buddha of this world cycle, he espoused the cause of the Paramats, imposed penalties on all monks who would not accept their tenets, and went so far as to force a Thathanabaing, one of the heads of the Order, to marry, marriage being permissible under the doctrines of the dissenters. This gave the schism a prominence which it could not otherwise have attained, and enabled it to last down to the present time, though its numbers, never very great, have steadily dwindled away. There are perhaps more Paramats in Prome than in any other town of Burma, Lower or Upper. Their most prominent doctrine is that the Shwe Nyan-daw existed before the world began, and will exist for all eternity. Ideas may arise from the influence of exterior objects, but when they have been freed from their connection with bodily creations, they have an independent existence, and when once they have come into being continue to live. This is explained by the assertion that the quasi-deity of the Buddha is founded only on his supreme wisdom. Buddha means, etymologically, "the wise," and Shin Gautama was simply an incarnation of the pure Wisdom. Men believed they actually saw him when he was already really a deity—nothing else than the inspiring Nyan-daw, which made the five Khandas appear to have an

the process. He scaled twelve stone three, a remarkably good weight for a Burman, and the gold used cost over £9000. The last occasion when the whole vast bulk was gilt was in 1871, when King Mindôn sent down his hti. On every feast-day and uboné, however, numbers of the pious clamber up wherever they can and fix on little squares of gold-leaf, packets of which can be bought at the stalls below for a few rupees. The consequence is that every now and again the spire breaks out in a rash of bright patches, which give it a mysterious, rough, uneven appearance on clear moonlight nights. Of late years a great part of the lower portion has been covered with thin plates of gold brought by the pious from all parts of the Buddhist world.

It is difficult to say what the real age of the building is, if, as sceptical Englishmen tell us, we are not to place implicit faith in the palm-leaf record. Trustworthy documents reach no further back than the time of the Peguan Queen Shin-saw-bu, who reigned in the early part of the sixteenth century; but there is every reason to believe that a pagoda existed there long before her time. The shrine has remained unaltered in size or shape since 1564, and probably will never be altered again. At all times and at all distances it looks imposing and sublime, like the religion whose followers have built it.

At the base of the pagoda hill are many monasteries embowered in their groves of palmyra palms and shady trees; and to the south is a small convent of nuns, not far from the zayat which the king of Siam had built for pilgrims from his dominions. Similar rest-houses line the Saung-dan all the way up to the pagoda, and they always have occupants; while at the season of the feast in Tabaung they are crowded to overflowing. Lepers, and cripples, and nuns in their white robes, line the steps, and cry out in piteous tones for alms from the passers-by. Nearer the top and round the platform itself are sellers of candles and coloured tapers, Chinese incense-sticks, and prayer-flags, along with abundance of gold-leaf. Numbers of young girls sit about with flowers, especially of the lotus, and meats of different kinds for offerings. Others—these always enfranchised pagoda slaves—sell toys and

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where some sturdy tree refuses to fall, and the clearing it away becomes a matter of very considerable danger. This taung-ya system is very wasteful as well as laborious, and annually draws down upon itself the denunciations of the English forest officers. But the hill-tribes who adopt it are too few to support themselves in any other way. They were long ago driven out of the plains by the Burmans, and now cling to their old nomadic life with a degree of obstinacy which Government officials, in a variety of ways, have found is not to be tempted by any tale of the present security and plenty of the low country, or even of the valleys among the hills. Rice, therefore, continues to be produced with the minimum and the maximum of labour; but none of the hill rice ever finds its way out of the country, and seldom even down to the plains.

The rice season, as far as the English merchant is concerned, commences in January and ends about May; but though this is pre-eminently the "busy season," there are purchases made in greater or less quantities all the year round. The relations between the great English rice firms and the simple jungle cultivators have not always been of a very elevating character, and it can hardly be denied that the fault lies wholly at the door of the foreigner. Missionaries in Burma are wont to mourn that their teachings are often rendered wholly nugatory by the want of scruple, and it might almost be said of honour, displayed by the great Rangoon rice firms. The good padres teach their proselytes that Christians are all honest and truthful. The ingenuous lads enter as clerks in a rice-mill and discover that Englishmen scarcely differ from the "poor heathen," except in being more lordly in the way of doing the thing.

Years ago, when there were not nearly so many mills as there are now, and not a quarter so many ships in the harbour during the rice season, things went on pretty equably. One day one firm would give a rupee or so more per hundred baskets, and the next day it would be another. But soon the mills began to increase in number and more ships came, and it was harder to get paddy. Then rival firms began to bid against each other. There was demurrage before their eyes, and it was terribly expensive work keeping the mill

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establishment up to its full strength. And so prices rose and rose until they became absurdly high, and no one profited but the hawks that preyed on the simple Burmese cultivators. Then the English merchants held a meeting, and all pledged themselves not to give more than the current market rate for paddy. This seemed a fair enough agreement; but after a while it was found that the boats all gravitated towards one or two firms. A little investigation showed that this was due to the fact that though they paid the ordinary rate, according to the compact, they had a smaller measuring basket than their neighbours. Accordingly every one went on reducing the size of his basket until the system became as ruinously absurd as ever it had been before. Then there was another meeting, at which it was unanimously agreed that this state of affairs would never do, and that it was absolutely necessary to come to some definite understanding. A committee was appointed which, after some deliberation, concluded that, if, in addition to abiding by the market rate, every one were bound to use a basket of a certain fixed size, there would be no chance for unfair speculations. A standard basket was therefore fixed upon; and the competitors were supposed to start fair again. But in no very long time, one firm put a false bottom in the basket, another wedged in a board; and so on, till matters got back to the old way. This state of affairs is hardly creditable to mercantile honour, and it certainly is by no means profitable.

Independently of this, paddy has gone up in price at an alarming rate of late years. The first heavy rise was in 1877, at the time of the Madras famine. That was also the time of the resolution to have a standard basket. Rice was wanted in any quantity for the famine districts, and millers gave an altogether fabulous price for grain. The game went on merrily, introduced the scandalous "paddy morality," and lasted long enough to make the cultivators think the new prices had come in for good. Far too many Burmese farmers are heavily in debt to the "chetties," the money-lending caste of the Madras coast. The agriculturists have borrowed money to build a pagoda or a monastery; to give a grand feast on the

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CHAPTER XLVI

FORMING THE NATIONAL CHARACTER

If the nation which has no history is happy, it is difficult to know what is to be said of the nation which has a very voluminous history, almost all of which is, however, pure romance. The effect on the Burmese of the fond imaginings of the Mahā Yazawin, the great Chronicle of Kings, is most undesirable. No defeats are recorded in those courtly pages; reverses are charmed into acts of clemency; armies vast as those that people dreamland march through its chapters; its heroes are of the old ballad type; its treasures such as might have been the produce of Aladdin's lamp. The result has been a permanent influence on the national character. Geoffrey of Monmouth's "Chronicle of British Kings" has left only a faint mark on the national literature, but had the English lived forty degrees nearer the line, they might still be believing in Brut, great-grandson of Æneas, and the unbroken line of kings of whom King Arthur was chief. As it is, the British Mahā Yazawin only supplied a spring for the poets of all the after time. The Burman Chronicle, on the other hand, has laid the foundation of the national character. Like all hardy, strong-limbed races, the Burmans are naturally proud; but this innate pride has been tenfold increased by the wonderful tales of the national annals. What is a Burman to think when he reads in the history of his country—there is but the one means of learning the past—that the English have only foothold in Burma through the clemency of a gracious king? They might have been crushed as effectually as the first settlers of Negrais Island; they might have been driven forth as easily as their seven-

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teenth-century ancestors from the factory at Bhamaw, far up the Irrawaddy on the confines of China; but Bagyidaw, the king, said, like the Lord Buddha, "All can take life, but who can give it back?" The Burmese annalist relates: "The kalabyu, the white strangers from the west, fastened a quarrel upon the Lord of the Golden Palace. They landed at Rangoon, took that place, and Prome, and were permitted to advance as far as Yandabo; for the king, from motives of piety and regard to life, made no effort whatever to oppose them. The strangers had spent vast sums of money on the enterprise; and by the time they reached Yandabo their resources were exhausted; and they were in great distress. They petitioned the king, who, of his clemency and generosity, sent them large sums of money to pay their expenses back, and ordered them out of the country."

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By the Treaty of Yandabo, extorted by the fear that the capital would fall into the hands of Sir Archibald Campbell, then thundering at the gates of Ava, the English acquired the provinces of Tenasserim and Arakan, and deprived the sovereign of two-thirds of his sea-board. The Province of Pegu, which was annexed after the second Burmese war in 1852-53, has never been formally ceded by any treaty. King Mindôn said, "Let them stay there; I cannot turn them out, but I will not be written down as the king that gave up Rangoon." Lord Dalhousie said, "A treaty with a man like that is useless"; and he straightway fixed upon a parallel of latitude as the northern boundary of British Burma, and put up a line of frontier pillars along it without reference to the Burmese Government at all. The Mahā Yazawin said, in effect, "The foreigner was starving in his own land, and the king bounteously granted him a resting-place in the dismal swamps by the sea." Until the Burmese kingdom finally disappeared the only approach to a recognition of the British possession of Pegu was an announcement from Mindôn Min that "orders had been issued to the governors of districts not to allow the Burmese troops to attack the territories of Myedè and Taung-ngu, in which the British Government had placed its garrisons." Well may it be said that Burmese kings submitted to accomplished facts, but did not sanction them. Shortly before the storming of

Malun, the King Mintayagyi sent a note to Sir Archibald Campbell representing that "it was contrary to his religious principles and the constitution of the Empire, to make any cession of territory, and he was bound to preserve its integrity."

Naturally, therefore, the up-country Burman thinks that his race is the bravest in all the realms of Zampudipa, the island in the south, with all its five hundred surrounding islets. The idea has been little checked by English communications and relations with the Lord of the Golden Palace. Such documents as the following are duly inserted in the Mahā Yazawin, and lose nothing in the translating. This was sent, in 1695, by Nathaniel Higginson, Governor of Madras, to the King of Ava. "To his Imperial Majesty who blesseth the noble city of Ava with his presence, Emperour of Emperours, and excelling the Kings of the East and the West in glory and honour, the clear firmament of Virtue, the fountain of Justice, the perfection of Wisdom, the lord of Charity and Protector of the Distressed, the first mover in the Sphere of Greatness, president in council, victorious in war; who feareth none and is feared by all; centre of the treasures of the Earth, and of the Sea; Lord Proprietor of Gold and Silver, Rubies, Amber, and all precious Jewels; favoured by Heaven and honoured by all men; whose brightness shines through the World as the light of the Sun, and whose great name will be preserved in perpetual memory."

After this promising exordium the letter goes on: "The fame of so glorious an Emperour, the Lord of power and riches, being spread throughout the whole earth, all nations resort to view the splendour of your greatness, and, with your majesty's subjects, to partake of the blessings which God Almighty hath bestowed upon your kingdom above all others. Your majesty has been pleased to grant your especial favours to the Honourable English Company, whose servant I am; and now send to present before the footstool of your throne a few toys, as an acknowledgment of your majesty's goodness, which I beg your majesty to accept, and to vouchsafe an audience to my servants and a gracious answer to my petition."

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over many rulers and princes, who wait round his throne with the badges of his authority; of the lord who is adorned with the greatest power, wisdom, knowledge, prudence, foresight, etc.; of the lord who is rich in the possession of elephants and horses, and in particular is the lord of many white elephants; of the lord who is the greatest of kings, the most just and the most religious; the master of life and death; we his slaves, the governor of Bengal, the officers and administrators of the Company, bowing and lowering our heads under the sole of his royal golden feet, do present to him, with the greatest veneration, this our humble petition."

Such documents might have flowed from the chronicler's own pen, and the Burmese historical student, in reading this unbought praise of nations, naturally takes it as honest homage due to the race, since there is now no king. So exalted an idea had the Court of the military power of the country that in 1810 a minister at Ava told Captain Canning that if proper application had been made to the king, he would have sent an army to Europe and put England in possession of France, and so ended all the troubles of the beginning of the century.

Most envoys sent to the Arbiter of Existence were treated very cavalierly in the way of interviews; not a few in the old days waited long months without ever seeing the king at all. All, down to Sir Douglas Forsyth, in 1874, had to go in shoeless, and sit cross-legged on the floor, an unaccustomed attitude which did not tend to render the position less ridiculous. In other ways they were treated with every indignity. When King Mintayagyi heard that Colonel Symes was coming, he went away to Mingôn, to contemplate his gigantic failure at a pagoda there. Thither the colonel had to follow him, congratulating himself on the circumstance that as the king was away from the palace, there would be the less trouble in seeing him. But he found himself vastly mistaken. On arriving at Mingôn he was told to take up his quarters on an island in the middle of the river. On this barren place, shunned by all Burmese as a polluted spot, where bodies were burnt and criminals executed, he had to remain forty days, and during all that

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He finishes by asking leave to send a factor next monsoon to reside at Syriam, opposite Rangoon, on the other side of the Pegu river. Edward Fleetwood was the envoy. He had to wait a long time before the gate of the palace stockade was opened; when that was done he had to bow three times to the building; half way across the esplanade he had to bow humbly three times again; then at fifteen yards' distance, and finally had to make the same obeisance to the king.

The answer to the governor, in the name of the ministers, ran as follows: "In the East, where the sun rises, and in that Oriental part of it which is called Chapudu; the Lord of water and earth, the Emperor of Emperors, against whose imperial majesty if any shall be so foolish as to imagine anything, it shall be happy for them to die and be consumed; the lord of great charity and help of all nations, the great Lord esteemed for happiness; the Lord of all riches, of elephants and horses and all good blessings; the Lord of high-built palaces of gold; the great and most powerful Emperor in this life, the soles of whose feet are gilt and set upon the heads of all people; we his great governor and president here, called Mahā Eggena Tibodis, do make known to the governor, Nathaniel Higginson," and so it goes on in the same strain, concluding with a notification of the presents sent—1500 viss of lac, 2500 viss of tin, 300 viss of ivory, 6 earthen dishes, and 8 lacquered boxes. This was, however, more satisfactory than that which fell to the lot of Ensign Lester in 1757, when he got a concession of Negrais Island and a commercial treaty from the conqueror, Alaungpaya. The gallant envoy received a present of eighteen oranges, two dozen heads of Indian corn, and five cucumbers. Two years later the garrison on the ceded island was massacred. The national annalist gloats over these things.

Here is another petition from the white foreigners: "Placing above our heads the golden majesty of the mighty lord, the possessor of the mines of rubies, amber, gold, silver, and all kinds of metals; of the lord under whose command are innumerable soldiers, generals, and captains; of the lord who is king of many countries and provinces, and emperor

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time not the slightest notice of him was taken by the court. Finally he was admitted on a kadaw, or "Beg-Pardon Day," one of those set apart for all inferiors and vassals to come and do homage and worship at the Golden Feet. For long it was the invariable custom to receive representatives of foreign states on these days. Colonel Burney was the first to refuse to be so treated, and he carried his point, though the wungyis told the king the reason why he did not come on the appointed kadaw day was because he was sick. The utmost protestations of Symes and Crawford failed to save them from the humiliation. Another favourite method of showing contempt for foreigners and exalting the national dignity was rather curious in its elaborate ingenuity. Foreign missions were provided for by a tax levied on outcasts. The money was only collected when an embassy was expected, and was applied to no other purpose than providing accommodation and food for the members of the mission. The coin was considered too vile to be put to any other use. Delaying the envoy at the gates was an invariable device. Just as he came up to the entrance a band of princes, with their followers, would turn in from a side street, and the luckless representative of England would have to stop and bite his nails till they had all passed in. Colonel Burney was delayed two hours in this way, and even Colonel Phayre, the first Commissioner of the three coast provinces, in 1856, had to wait on his elephant till the Eingshemin and his train filed in before him. Arrived at the palace, all the earlier envoys were made to fall on their knees, and shikho to the central spire of the royal residence. The members of the embassy of 1856 were nearly bullied into taking off their hats to the pythat. The object was to show them as suppliants at the Golden Feet, honoured by being allowed to view his dwelling, and elevated to the summit of earthly ambition by being admitted to an interview. Symes and Cox paid for their admission in this way. Besides this official bad treatment the plenipotentiaries were victimised with numberless personal insults. Even the Supreme Court on at least one occasion refused to see Cox. He was knocked up long after midnight one night by a clerk who wanted to get a nutmeg-grater to show to the king. The

Myowun wrote to him to say that as the envoy would not take his advice he must break off all intercourse, and the English thanthaman would be good enough not to come near his house for the future. Captain Cox had had a fence put up round his house to keep away the inquisitive rabble, at a cost of twenty rupees. One morning when he woke up he found this had been unceremoniously carried away, and that it had been used to enclose a place near the river where the heir-apparent's head might be washed. Finally great pressure was put upon him to take the oath of allegiance to the king; he was to drink the water in which the muskets and lances of the guard had been dipped, and it was expressly stipulated that he should pay for his oath just as any Burman would have to do. Scores of like details might be mentioned with regard to all the other ambassadors and residents. It will be sufficient, however, to mention that, in later years, one resident had a cane flourished over his head by a convict lictor, and that the last *chargé d'affaires* of all was chased by a howling rabble from the Mandalay bazaar to the Residency gates, which were broken in—no great exertion of strength was necessary certainly—all because he had killed a pariah dog that was snapping at his heels.

If the various Government representatives were treated in this way, non-official Englishmen could not expect great reverence to be paid to them, and it is hardly worth mentioning that in 1881 a Rangoon merchant, yelled at by convict lictors, went down on his knees while one of the leading spirits of the massacres, the Hpaung Wun, went by on his elephant. Little wonder then that the patriotic fictions of the Mahā Yazawin were believed, and that the perusal of them was all the more greedily indulged in. The wearing of shoes in the Palace was never settled till there had ceased to be a Lord of it.

But it is not so much the English that suffered—though occasionally a few of them did get stoned—as the smaller nations and tribes who live around and among the Burmese. It must be acknowledged that the Burman is a sad bully; but the white strangers could reduce him to civility, if to nothing else, very speedily. It is different with other races—some perhaps aboriginal, some invaders of Burma as much

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CHAPTER XLVII

THE LORD OF THE CELESTIAL ELEPHANT AND OF MANY WHITE ELEPHANTS

713 THE *Royal History of Kings* enumerates altogether 587,000
175 kings, following one another in regular succession. From
643 Mahā Thamada, the great first ruler of land and of sea, there
were 334,569 sovereigns till the time of the most excellent
Buddha Gautama. From thence onward, the Mahā Yazawin
carefully records the sequence of the predecessors of the last
ruler of the Eastern Land, Thibaw Min. Western chroniclers
point out incredulously that the hunter Aung Zaya, who died
in 1760, founded the present dynasty under the title of
Alaungpaya (commonly written Alompra), and till his
rescue of the country from the victorious Peguans, held
no more exalted rank than that of headman of his native
village. But this scepticism ignores the doctrine of Kan,
which provides that none can succeed to the throne of the
Arbiter of Existence and Great Lord of Righteousness but
those whose merit in previous existences entitles them to it.
643 The king emphatically rules by what is called in the Western
kingdoms the right divine. The eldest daughter of the
reigning king was always declared tabindaing, she was for-
bidden to marry till the death of the sovereign. When that
occurred, if there were no sons to succeed, there was an
interregnum till the tabindaing could find a husband to
ascend the throne. This selection was not made by the
laws of passion or personal inclination, but was solely de-
cided according to the principles of kan. A royal chariot
was harnessed to a fiery steed and driven away from the
palace with no one to guide it. The horse roamed about,

suffering no one to enter till he came to the person decided by fate to rule the country, usually some one of the royal lineage, or of some other princely line, who had wandered or been carried off from court. Then the horse waited patiently till the sleeper should wake up; the tales always represent the prince as asleep when the chariot arrives. When he rouses himself he steps into the chariot, and without guidance, the horse forthwith gallops back to the palace and the tabindaing finds a husband and the country a king. Alompra became sovereign, only in a slightly different way, but his descent from Mahā Thamada must be unimpeachable.

Long before he took up arms and won for himself the throne, the soothsayers saw about him signs that betokened his coming dignity. When he slept his arms shone like fire; vultures perched on the houses of his enemies; gorgeous butterflies and gay-plumaged birds and strange animals entered his dwelling; he dug up an ancient image of the Buddha not far from his doorstep; when he came to fight it was manifest that he was favoured even beyond the great men of old. He possessed a sword that flew through the air and cut off heads; his shoes enabled him to clear miles at a stride; his fairy spear could spit a whole line of soldiers at once; his javelin could be hurled to any distance; finally, as a fifth weapon, he had a gun which never missed its mark, and was brought down to him by a thagyā. The possession of these five weapons at once proved his right to the throne and secured his holding it. It is true that some of the omens which signalled his right have appeared in others with very different result. A Karen minlaung, or embryo king, displayed the same fire-streaming arms, and raised a rebellion since the British occupation of Pegu. He gained a considerable following, and seemed formidable for a time, till the English wise men pointed out that the fiery glow was produced by rubbing phosphorus on his skin. Then all went against him as an impostor, and he very soon vanished into the hill-country. Similarly, in 1858, a poor fisherman at Twante, a large village not far from Rangoon, dragged up in his net a small image of the Buddha. Such discoveries are always looked upon as an omen of high

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destiny, and according to the common superstition, the fisherman believed that he would rise in dignity, restore the Talaing kingdom, and revive religion. He announced the supernatural call in the village bazaar. A few desperate characters joined him, took possession of the town, and issued a proclamation calling upon all the faithful to rally to his standard. But the British civil authorities stepped in and broke up the procession which was going in solemn state to the pagoda to inaugurate and consecrate the fisherman in his new profession. The claimant of royal honours escaped at the time, but was afterwards given up by the villagers. In each of these cases there was deception or misapprehension of the meaning of the omens, but the abundance of the signs in the case of Alompra disposes of the assertion that he was a mere adventurer. He himself thoroughly believed in his high destiny, and talked of it in right royal fashion to Captain Baker, an ambassador sent to him in 1755 by the Honourable East India Company. This gentleman, the commander of an East Indiaman, who, under the instructions of his employers, evidently regarded the great conqueror as little better than a savage, brought him a present of a chest or two of gunpowder, a couple of muskets and carbines, a gilt looking-glass, some red earth in bags, and half a dozen bottles of lavender water (there is no mention of glass beads), and offered Alompra the assistance of the great company. Whereupon his majesty burst into a defiant laugh and replied in the following fashion: "Have I asked, or do I want any assistance to reduce my enemies to subjection? Let none conceive such an opinion! Have I not in three years' time extended my conquests three months' journey in every quarter without the help of cannon or muskets? Nay, I have with bludgeons only, opposed and defeated these Peguans who destroyed the capital of this kingdom, and took the prince prisoner; and a month hence I intend to go with a great force to Dagón (Rangoon), where I have an army now lying, when I will advance to the walls of Pegu, blockade and starve them out of it, which is the last town I have now to take to complete my conquest, and then I will go in quest of Bournou (the French governor of Syriam, whom he afterwards actually did put to

death). Captain, see this sword ; it is now three years since it has been constantly exercised in chastising my enemies ; it is indeed almost blunt with use ; but it shall be continued to the same till they are utterly dispersed. Do not talk of assistance. I require none. The Peguans I can wipe away as thus (drawing the palm of one hand over the other). See these arms and this thigh (drawing his loose coat-sleeve up to the armpit, and lifting his pasoh, so as to display a bare tattooed leg) ; amongst a thousand you cannot see my match. I can crush a hundred such as the King of Pegu." (Quoted from Crawford.)

Two years later he talked to Ensign Lester in the same bombastic strain, telling him that he would go to Madras, and that if a nine-pounder shot was to hit him it could do him no harm, with a good deal more to the same effect. He is described at this time, when he was about forty-five years of age, as five feet eleven in height, and of a powerful build, with a long, but not a thin face, the expression not being improved by a number of smallpox pitmarks. He had a broad but very retreating forehead, a characteristic shared by all his descendants, and prominent in the case of King Mindôn.

Alaungpaya, then, was no feeble founder of the present line of successors to the great Mahā Thamada. He certainly had the power to command, and his military successes carried the peacock flag from far away towards Dacca, down to the Siamese capital. Assuredly he was a worthy follower of the great first king, and the Burmese believed firmly in the unbroken character of the succession. Accordingly all the old Indian and Sakyan customs were carefully observed by the Burmese royal family. Such were the marriage with half-sisters, and the consequent preserving unmarried of the king's eldest daughter ; the reverence of the three most excellent animals, the peacock of the sun, the hare of the moon, and the kalawaik, the carrying bird of Vishnu, whose eyes like jewels look friendly on the stranger ; and the beith-theit, the consecration by pouring out of water at the accession. Marriage with half-sisters was only allowed to the king, not to the people at large, or even to the princes of the blood-royal. The throne was painted over with representations of

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643 the peacock and the hare, typifying the descent of the king from the solar and lunar races, which was also directly laid claim to in the title, *netwetbuyin*, sovereign of the rising sun. Similarly with the titles *khattia*, implying that he had dominion over the crops, and *yaza*, because he could instruct men in the laws, a somewhat doubtful ability in regard to all except perhaps King *Mindôn*. The consecration by *beittheit* was completed in three special ceremonies, as was the case with the *Payālaung* chosen to be the first ruler.

1. *Yaza-beit*, the consecrating of him as king.
2. *Manda beittheit*, the solemn marrying him to a queen of royal lineage.
3. *Thenga beittheit*, the confirmation or renewal of his engagement to abide by the laws, whereupon full powers for the government and administration of the country are conferred.

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The actual coronation ceremony was latterly a mere form, but was intended to mark the claim of the Lord of the Golden Palace to be the representative of the universal monarch, the *Sekyawadé* king, who never makes his appearance during the time allotted to the publication and duration of the religious institutions of a Buddha. It consisted principally in incantations and sprinkling with holy water from the Ganges, performed by the *pōnnas*, the Brahmin astrologers; the Burman *yahans* had nothing whatever to do with it. Besides the *pōnnas*, only a few of the chief ministers were present. The really national part of the ceremony was the royal progress round the city moat, made seven days after the *beittheit*. The king left the city by the Eastern Gate, the precise moment being notified by a discharge of cannon. He then entered the state barge, a most gorgeously gilt and carved construction, surpassing even the traditional coach of the Lord Mayor of London. This boat was then slowly rowed round the moat, with music clashing all around, and bands of dancers supplying the place of a rejoicing populace. Then when the circuit had been completed, the newly crowned monarch entered again between the guardian ogres of the Eastern Gate, a fresh salvo of artillery announcing the arrival at the palace. The ceremony was simple enough, but King

Thibaw never went through it. In the first days of his reign he was afraid to leave the nandaw, lest conspirators might find the chance too good a one to lose, and later on, a fear that the delayed festival might suggest ideas of previous faint-heartedness came in the way. Consequently, though he was crowned successor to Mahā Thamada as far as the beittheit was concerned, and therefore became the source of the law, the guardian of the welfare of the country, the recipient of the revenues, and the chief administrator of justice, he was no proper successor to the warlike Alaungpaya. Possibly the failure to assume the sturdy spirit of the first of the family may account for the deficiency in some of the attributes derived from the first king, a deficiency which even the most loyal of his subjects did not hesitate to admit.

The first ruler was chosen for his strict adherence to the five fundamental precepts now incumbent on all men, and for his general sanctity. These qualities are inherent in all successors, though sometimes it is difficult to distinguish them. From them sprang four other laws incumbent on all kings and rulers. These thengaha, kingly laws, or byammazoya are as follows:—

1. Thathameda, ordaining that he shall not receive more than a tithe of the produce of the country.
2. Purithameda, ordaining that the king shall engage to pay his servants and army once every six months.
3. Thamapatha, by which the king binds himself to assist his subjects with money, and to receive payment of it within three years, without charging interest.
4. Wāsapaya, the use of courteous and fitting language, according to the age and position in life of the persons addressed.

It is to be feared that these kindly kingly laws were not found suitable to the conditions of modern society. At any rate they were not very strictly observed by Thibaw Min.

Nevertheless that monarch was very far from being such an unlovely character as most Europeans have been led to believe. It was explicitly denied by many that he drank at all; it is certain that whatever excesses he may have plunged

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175 into in the remorse caused by the massacres of February 1879, he was assuredly not a confirmed drunkard. His worst fault was that he was easy, or call it weak-spirited if you like. It is an open secret that he was not intended to be king. His father, Mindôn Min, had a strong liking for the young yahan, but his intention, if he had any, was that the pious and well-read Nyaungyan prince, who died a refugee at Barrackpore, near Calcutta, was to be his successor, and if the court or the town had been polled, the choice would have fallen on the same burly, good-natured individual.

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[135] It must be understood that, notwithstanding the precautions for the preservation of the pure blood-royal, the system of keeping a princess tabindaing, to be married to the new ruler, it by no means followed that the eldest son of this union, or, indeed, any son by this queen at all, necessarily succeeded to the throne. It was not often that there was a recognised Eingshemin, an heir-apparent to the throne, but when there was such a dignitary, he might be the fifth, or the tenth, or the thirtieth son, the only stipulation being that he should be the child of one of the four chief queens. The nomination rested with the king. A consideration of the gruesome history of the parricide kings, who reigned in one of the countries of the Myissi Madetha, the middle country, as India is called, each of whom ascended a throne stained with a father's blood, until the horrified populace of Pataliputra revolted and exterminated the whole house; the reading of this bloody chapter in the royal annals may have prompted the custom, but it is certain that it is not often that the heir to the throne was recognised. Mindôn made no sign till his last illness came upon him. Then when it was evident that he could not survive, he named the Nyaungyan mintha and after him the yellow-robed Thibaw prince. Then palace intrigue began. The Thibaw prince, it was well known, had a passion for the tabindaing, Selin Supaya (Selina Sophia as she was called by some of the English residents in Mandalay), and the second of the Supayās, for there were three of them, was equally enamoured of the young Patama Byan. Therefore the

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queen-mother resolved to gratify all parties, and become herself queen dowager. She opened up communications with the then all-powerful Kin Wunmingyi, the Premier as he was usually called. That able minister saw continued power in store for himself if he could get the unsophisticated pyin-sin placed on the throne. Therefore he threw himself into the plot. The princes were summoned by a forged royal order to come before his majesty, bid him farewell, and hear his nomination of a successor. As they came up to the hmawgaw, the mirror throne room, where the kings body afterwards lay in state, they were seized separately and forthwith hurried off to prison. The Nyaungyan and his brother, the Nyaungôk prince, received timely warning, and instead of coming to the palace went straight off for sanctuary to the English Church, whence they afterwards escaped, disguised, to the protection of the British flag in the compound of the British Residency. But though they thus saved their lives, as appeared five months afterwards, when the other princes were done to death, the throne was lost, for Thibaw was left master of the situation, and soon completed his arrangements for securing his position. At first everything went well. It was necessary to retain the support of the Kin Wungyi, and that astute minister, acting on the idea that he could easily manage the raw young ex-neophyte, proceeded to draw up a scheme for a constitutional government, the greater part of which was written for him by the late Dr. Clement Williams, the first English Resident in Mandalay, and afterwards an independent trader. This constitution was published with a great flare of trumpets and much talk about the establishment of Western methods, and the raising of Burma to the rank of a first-class Eastern power. The people at large did not perceive any very radical difference, as far as the payment of moneys was concerned, under the new system. Perhaps it would have turned out well if it had lasted. But it was not destined to last.

As soon as the funeral rites of the dead king were over, and Thibaw Min had been sprinkled with the consecrated water by the pōnnas, he proposed to marry "Selina Sophia," and take the younger sister, the Supayalat, along with her

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according to agreement. But the tabindaing was not willing. On the contrary, she took the altogether unprecedented step of cutting off her hair and entering a nunnery. The slighted golden monarch was furious. The two luckless maids of honour of the scornful beauty had their hands chopped off by the "spotted man." What became of the nun herself no one seems to know. Whether she went to her grave or to a jungle convent is a matter which neither her friends nor her enemies ever revealed. Thibaw Min at any rate had to be satisfied with the Supayalat. He very soon found that he had quite enough to do with her. The mother had always been known as strong-minded; the daughter developed an even greater amount of determination, and between them they soon reduced the ruler of the umbrella-bearing chiefs to submission. It had never been their intention that the Kin Wungyi should derive the greatest part of advantage from the scheme for enthroning the Thibaw prince, and they gradually worked his majesty into a state of desperation. However meek he might be towards them, he soon became embarrassingly testy with his courtiers, and after a time took to using what was called Tharrawaddy's spear. Kōnbaung Min, that fiery descendant of Alaungpaya, in his latter years amused himself with spearing his courtiers with a javelin he always kept by him. This trait, which soon grew into a regular homicidal mania, and led to his being smothered in the end, seemed to have broken out afresh in the young king, and the Rangoon papers began to talk of hereditary insanity. Soon, however, the whole civilised world was to be shocked. The queen mother and the Supayalat persuaded the king that he would never be safe till the princes were put out of the way. It is said that Thibaw Min at first flatly refused, and then, broken down by daily taunts, pleaded the danger from the British Government. Here also, however, he was overruled. The queen dowager called in a European (not an Englishman), and asked what would be done if all the imprisoned princes were massacred? He answered there would be a great deal of talk and nothing more. So Thibaw gave in, and said, "Shin-ba se, let them be cleared away"; and seventy of the royal blood, men, women, and children, were murdered in the next three days, and buried

within the palace, in a long trench dug for the purpose. The eldest prince, the Mekhaya, a man nearly three times Thibaw's age, and hated for his fierce, proud demeanour, died shrieking for mercy at the hands of his own slaves, whom he had often tortured. The Thonsè mintha, equally overbearing in his manner, and a fanatical hater of the English, whom he lost no opportunity of insulting, gained in his death an esteem he had never known while living. With his last breath he hurled defiance and imprecations at the brother whom he had always despised, and prophesied a speedy and bloody end for the "runaway monk." The weakly and gentle-mannered Maingun murmured a prayer that the hideous sin of murder might be pardoned to its instigator and perpetrators, and then resigned his neck to the club which sent him to the blissful seats of nat-dewas. The princesses were subjected to nameless horrors, and the treatment of the children recalled the days when ravaging hordes marched through the land with babes spitted on their pike staffs for standards. The poor old regent of Pegu, governor at Rangoon when the British came in 1852, had his nostrils and gullet crammed with gunpowder, and was thus blown up. But the tale of horrors is not one to enlarge upon. They were conducted by those who became the king's most trusted advisers. All the three days bands of music were playing throughout the palace, and dancers posturing to divert attention from what was going on, and to drown the cries of the victims.

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The custom of putting to death all dangerous rivals on the accession of a new king was without doubt almost a recognised thing in Burma whenever there was a new sovereign. Many Burmans defend it warmly, on the plea that it secured the peace of the country. Where there were so many of the royal blood, the appointment of one, possibly among the youngest, to the supreme power, could not but lead to discontent, breaking out into open rebellion when the slighted found themselves strong enough to feel hope of success for a rising. The accession of Mindôn was marked by no such atrocities, but he came to the throne under exceptional circumstances. His brother, the Pagān Min, was deposed because he would do nothing to make peace with the English, then threatening

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to occupy the capital, which they were so near effecting in the first war of 1826. The deposed king was allowed to live happy with his game-cocks. The people's idol, the fiery "War Prince," was passed over because he was pledged to fight to the death, and there was an explicit understanding that he, or failing him, his issue, should succeed to the royal honours on the death of King Mindôn. That pious and enlightened monarch was forced on the country by a happy necessity. But it was very different when he died. There was no war to distract the people, and further, there was a multiplicity of candidates. The Convener of the Fifth Great Synod had, during his lifetime, fifty-three recognised wives, besides an indefinite number of handmaidens. By the wives he had altogether one hundred and ten children, forty-eight sons and sixty-two daughters. Of the forty-eight sons only twenty-four were alive at the time of his death, and two of these were detained as political prisoners in India, the Myingun and Myingundaing princes, the originators of the rebellion of 1866, when the "War Prince" was killed, and the king himself had a narrow escape. The Myingundaing died many years ago in India; the Myingun still lives on an allowance from the French Government in Saigon.

There were thus twenty-two possible successors to the Golden Throne. One was a lunatic—the Kyabin Mintha; four were little boys under ten years of age, others were disqualified for a variety of reasons, but there remained the Thonsè, the Mekhaya, the Nyaungyan, and the Nyaungôk, all of whom were considered as having certainly greater claims than the actual successor. Thibaw Min wanted to keep them all in prison, and a range of barracks was actually being constructed for their occupation when the massacres occurred. Whatever foreigners may think, all Burmans lay the guilt of the executions at the door of the queen and the queen dowager. When some were killed, prudential motives, as well as a ghoul-like thirst for blood, prompted the murder of all, and this accordingly was carried out. Of all the twenty-four princes, excluding the king, there were left alive but four little boys in sanctuary in Mandalay monasteries, one of them barely five years old, and three refugees in India, one of the four, the Mingundabing

prince, having died soon after. Of the princesses, thirty-five of whom survived their father, four were killed in the February massacres, and twenty-one kept in confinement in the palace, some of whom almost certainly died of want or external violence. The remainder were of too little account to be taken notice of. Thirty-seven queens were alive when the late king died. Thirteen fled when his illness became dangerous, and so extinguished themselves. Twenty-three were kept in underground dungeons, or under close surveillance in the palace; one only, the mother of the Mekhaya, with fourteen of her children and grandchildren, were killed in 1879. This is rather a dismal list, and the shadow of it rested over the royal throne. Whether Thibaw Min was the direct author of the tragedy or not, the stain of the crime and the recollection of it clung to him. After its accomplishment, the king fell more and more under the malign influence of the termagant queen. The Kin Wungyi and his constitution were ignominiously bundled out of the palace. The former all-powerful minister became little more than a private citizen, and the vile conductors of the massacres were the chief in authority. With their lotteries and monopolies they had very soon brought the country to ruin, had it not been for the blessing of English rule.

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Personally, Thibaw Min could not be otherwise than miserable. The harridan queen kept him in most humble subjection. Hitherto every king of Burma had had at least four chief queens, those of the east, west, north, and south palaces, of whom the southern queen was supreme. But Supayalat persisted in remaining sole controller of the royal heart. Terrible stories are told of the death by lingering torture which proved the portion of maids of honour on whose charms the unhappy king is said to have looked with favour. Such an unusual state of things, such a disgrace as a woman's slave for a king, had never befallen any country before. A son was born in the end of 1879, but he died of smallpox in the epidemic of March 1880, and a daughter in the end of the same year compared but badly with King Mindôn's three or four a year.

The king was practically a prisoner within his golden walls. No king of Burma had ever been much in the habit

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175 of leaving the palace. Possession of it, with the vast arsenal which it contained, implied the subduing of the entire country. When a monarch went forth to worship at a pagoda or preside at some function, he left the nandaw in charge of the prince or minister whom he could best trust. But poor Thibaw Min could trust no one, or at any rate believed that this was his state. From the time he succeeded to the throne till he left it a prisoner, he never went outside the palace walls.

CHAPTER XLIX

KING THIBAW

II.—THE MANY-TITLED

643 HIS most glorious, excellent majesty, the present ruler of the city of Mandalay, or Yatanabōng Nepyidaw, ruler of the sea and land, lord of the rising sun, sovereign of the empires of Thumaparanta and Zampudipa, and of other great empires and countries, and king of all the umbrella-bearing chiefs, lord of the mines of gold, silver, rubies, amber, and the noble serpentine, chief of the Saddan, or celestial elephant, and master of many white elephants, the supporter of religion, owner of the sekya, or Indra's weapon, the sun-descended monarch, sovereign of the power of life and death, great chief of righteousness, king of kings, and possessor of boundless dominions and supreme wisdom, the arbiter of existence, has a very bad character. He killed his brothers and sisters and he drinks gin.

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● [175] He is very far from being a fool for all that. All his predecessors killed certain of their relatives too when they came to the throne; only they had not so many as Thibaw, and there were no electric telegraphs in those days. Besides, they had not such pressing need to clear the field. Thibaw was put on the throne by a palace intrigue, and if he had not disposed of his brothers they would probably have killed him. So say all his majesty's subjects, and they ought to know. The drinking of plebeian gin is another matter, and is likely to be the ruin of the many-titled monarch. It is telling on him fast. When he came to the throne he was a very good-looking young man, the

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Kin Wunmingyi, who, after all, had been to Europe and was versed in public affairs, lost all influence, and was succeeded as adviser by the Taingda Mingyi, a statesman of the typical oriental kind, supple, unscrupulous and grasping. Thibaw even achieved a certain kind of popularity with his subjects. He insulted our representative and blustered at all foreigners, and finally frightened the Indian Government by covert threats into suddenly withdrawing the whole *personnel* of the Residency. Then it was announced by sound of gong all over Burma that the Sovereign of Land and Water, by reason of his great might and glory, had caused the hated English to flee from his sight, and would, in his own good time, carry the great peacock flag to the south, and plant it once more on the shores of the Gulf of Martaban.

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It is a great triumph for the pōngyi's son, as he was nicknamed when it was safe to do so, and it will be remembered about him quite as long as the fiendish cruelty of his massacres. We have certainly not done with Thibaw yet. We cannot go on for ever keeping strong garrisons at Thayet-myo and Toungoo, our frontier stations, where the soldiers have little else to do but die of fever and cholera and heat-apoplexy. Constant scares ruin the trade in Rangoon, and, as Lord Ripon says, when we are attacked in our mercantile interests we are wounded in our most irritable point. The abrogation of the monopolies is little better than a sham, and the negotiations for a new treaty are little more sincere. Thibaw will not receive a new Resident in the Royal City, except shoeless and practically lying on his stomach. We can hardly agree to that again.

The rupture came six years later, brought about by secret treatings with France and autocratic dealings with the Bombay Burma Trading Corporation. The Burmese kingdom fell with the suddenness of a paralytic stroke, and King Thibaw was a prisoner within a month of his rejection of the British ultimatum. He now lives forgotten at Ratnagiri.

not very much more could be said for the infantry—not so much in some cases.

The lancers were followed by the commissariat and control departments, a rabble of men carrying pots and pans and rolls of bamboo matting and boxes intended for ammunition, but containing none, and huge wicker baskets, besides a lot of other baggage which might be useful, but did not look like it. There were five or six hundred of these men, guarded by a handful of dah and spearmen.

In their wake followed the artillery corps; first, thirty or forty two-pounders, similar to those between the different regiments, and with the same complement of men to each gun, and the same appliances. Then the elephant battery, each elephant with two jingals mounted on the howdah. These jingals, throwing a half or three-quarter pound ball, with their long pointed tails and muzzles pointed up to the skies, look very much like telescopes from a distance. In actual warfare they would probably do nothing beyond scaring the elephant. Besides the mahaut, each elephant carried a man to manage the guns. Fifty of them were loaded with this mosquito artillery, and behind them came fifty more with nothing on them but the mahaut. Many were most magnificent tuskers, and they constituted the most valuable part of his majesty's army.

Behind the elephants came the heavier guns, drawn by buffaloes, but they were apt to stick in the heavy, unmade roads, and the buffaloes themselves were not easy brutes to manage, especially on a warm day when their skin begins to crack. This battery, therefore, usually went but a short distance. These heavy guns were mostly very ancient ship guns of Portuguese, Dutch, French, and Arakanese make, and would be considered valuable in an English parish museum. They were formidable to none except primitive mountaineers, and to them chiefly from the noise they made.

As this account shows, Thibaw's army was neither threatening nor efficient, and the events of 1885 bore out the estimate. When the time came for adding Upper Burma to the British dominions it was effected with the least possible amount of bloodshed on either side. It might be supposed from what has been said that the ahmudan

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712 forts Captain Barker of H.M.'s 89th P.V., the best English
authority on Upper Burma military matters, said, "without
ditch, without flank defence, without expense magazines,
without traverses to protect the gunners, they are mere shell-
712 traps for the destruction of the garrison." He might have
361 added that they were without armament, and in 1885 they
surrendered without firing a shot. Mandalay itself has
naturally a strong position because of its inaccessibility.
To the east it is guarded by the Shan mountains and the
marshy plains below. Rivers and creeks make the approach
from the south difficult. On the north is an impassable
morass. On the west of the city are wide-spreading, thickly
populated suburbs, and the river-side is defended by a high
embankment. But the weakness of Mandalay lay in the
worthlessness of the army and the feebleness of its armament.
701 The kingdom of Burma was, in fact, nothing like so powerful
● 175 as it was a quarter of a century before, when the second
Burmese war was ended. When the end came Mandalay
fell to a force twenty miles away.

000 *Note.*—It has been brought to the writer's notice that several
worthy Frenchmen have been hurt by the references to foreigners in
this and in preceding and following chapters. It may therefore be
noted here that the count who sold syrups was not the Comte de
Trevelec, who was a contemporary of the Marquis de Gallifet at St.
Cyr, and that there is no reference to General de Facieu, a popular,
picturesque, and notable French gentleman. Neither were Louis
Vossion nor Monsieur Fernand d'Avéra thought of when this book was
written. Vossion was a stubborn patriot. Monsieur d'Avéra is a genial
patriot with a doubt whether France or Upper Burma has the greater
claims on him. In any case for fifty years Fernand d'Avéra has been
one of the best known and best liked men in Burma.

the right of land tenure should always have been so fixed and certain. The fondness with which the people cling to their ancestral lands has something of almost religious fervour in its tenacity. As long as a family remains in the neighbourhood of their inheritance nothing will persuade them to give up their connection with it. In Upper Burma, to the present day, land is never sold as the term would be understood in Europe. The transaction which goes by the name of a sale is, in reality, a kind of mortgaging, or, more exactly, pawning, if such a term can be used with regard to land.

The estate passes from one occupant to another for a certain sum of money, and it is clearly understood that if at any time the original owner is in a position to reclaim his property he may do so whether the purchaser likes it or not. Farther than this even, the buyer cannot sell the land to a third party without first obtaining the consent of its former owner. Notwithstanding this feeling, however, it is seldom that a property can be found which has remained for any considerable length of time in the same family. This is owing to the constant rebellions and wars between Peguans and Burmese and Shans, which afflicted the country for five hundred years. All those who were not killed were driven away from their former homes by ruthless invaders or were drafted off to fight for the king. In the short intervals of peace rival governors, in desperation for means to raise the revenues expected from their provinces, would tempt people away from their former homes by the offer of rewards or a reduction of body service. Thus in some cases the proprietors were killed out, in others they left for districts so remote that it was impossible to retain a hold on the ancestral property, however great their attachment to it. As an illustration of the sanctity attaching to ownership of land, the law concerning church lands may be quoted from Buddhaghosha's Parables: "Whoso shall take for himself or for another wutmye, consecrated or glebe-land, shall become a mite, or a white ant upon that sacred ground for the whole of 100,000 cycles."

The eighteenth of the original eighteen laws given by Manu to the king refers to the partition of property, and an elaboration of this points out sixteen descriptions of children who cannot claim a portion of their parents' property. The

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36 Parama nu-myu	= one a-nu-myu, visible particles of dust, such as the motes dancing in the sunbeam.	804
36 Anu-myu	= one ka-nyit-che, a gross particle, such as the dust which falls from the style, when a scribe writes on a palm-leaf.	
7 Ka-nyit-che	= one than ôk-kaung, a louse's head.	
7 Than ôk-kaung	= one môn-nyin se, a mustard seed.	
3 Môn-nyin se	= one hnan se, a grain of sesamum.	
4 Hnan se	= one san se, a grain of rice.	
4 San se	= one hkyin ywe, a seed of the <i>Abrus precatorius</i> .	
2 Hkyin ywe	= one ywegyi, a seed of the <i>Aden-anthera pavorina</i> .	
4 Ywegyi	= one pè.	
2 Pè	= one mu.	
2 Mu	= one mat.	
4 Mat	= one kyat.	
5 Kyat	= one bo.	
20 Bo	= beiththa, a viss, 3.652 lbs. avoirdupois.	
4 Beiththa	= one tula.	
4000 Tula	= one tapông, or tasu.	

The only weights in ordinary use are the mu, mat, ngamu (or hkwè), half a kyat, and the kyat. The standard weights are usually formed with a figure of the sacred hantha on them, or sometimes with the animal representing the royal birthday.

Formerly the Burmese had no stamped coinage, and the silver and gold used, mixed in greater or less amount with alloy, which necessitated the calling in of an assayer for every transaction, was always dealt out by weight. King Mindôn struck gold coins stamped with the lion and the peacock, silver and copper with the royal peacock, and lead with the hare. The lead coins were simply blobs of metal like a spherical bullet squeezed out of shape. One might examine thousands of them and never see a hare. Mandalay

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be in danger of losing all, as not sufficiently appreciating the dignities conferred upon him.

As soon as Mindôn Min died, or at least as soon as it was officially made known that he was dead (for there are great doubts as to whether he died on the 12th September or on the 1st October 1878, or on some date between these two), as soon as the ministerial announcement came out on the latter date, the bo-ho, the great drum and gong suspended in a tower by the eastern gate, were stopped. The new king's drum and gong were not sounded till nine o'clock in the evening of the funeral, after which they were struck in the ordinary way every three hours. Bands of soldiers and police with gongs patrolled the streets all night long to see that everything was quiet. The princes had been seized and cast into prison some time before, but there was a chance that their adherents might raise disturbances on their behalf, and this precaution was kept up for some time. Meanwhile a pagoda, to serve as a mausoleum, was being run up with the greatest expedition close to the Mint, on the eastern side of the palace, in the outer enclosure, and this was finished in four or five days. The king had specially requested that his body should not be burnt according to ordinary royal custom, and the Sinbyumè, the senior queen and chief mourner, had resolved that this wish should be respected.

The corpse was laid out in state, and on the 3rd October the greater number of the foreigners and the officials of inferior rank were admitted to look upon it. This ceremony was conducted in the Hman-nandaw, the "Glass Palace," a room in which Thibaw Min has received most Europeans since. The body lay in the fore part of the chamber on a gilt couch, or bedstead, studded with bits of glass, and was robed from head to foot in white, a piece of white satin covering the face. The royal number of white umbrellas was canopied overhead, and at the top part of the couch were arranged the regalia in a row. On this occasion the Sinbyumè and the Anauk Nammadaw, the favourite queen of the West Palace, sat by the couch and slowly waved gorgeous peacock fans. At other times the sonless queens took it in turn to watch by the body, two at a time.

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Round about were grouped all the other queens and princesses, weeping piteously. The deceased king's brother, the ex-Pagān Min, the newly elected Thibaw Min, and all the high officials, were behind at the farther end of the room. Suspended over the corpse was a small flat piece of gold shaped like a heart, called thényun, and in this the leip-bya, the butterfly spirit of the departed king, was supposed to dwell till such time as he should be buried. The public lying in state only lasted a few hours, but the body remained there unaltered till the time of the funeral. It was not certainly known whether any attempt at embalming was made, but the body was very much shrunk, and contrasted greatly with the genial presence of his majesty when last he was seen alive.

The funeral took place on the 7th, at noon. It was the first that took place that day, and no other was allowed until the royal obsequies were entirely over. The city gates were shut and strongly guarded to prevent any such going forth if any one had been bold or ignorant enough to attempt it. From the gates of the interior palace stockade to the tomb, the whole route of the procession was laid with scarlet cloth, and round the mausoleum was a wide bamboo fence covered with long cloth, inside of which were some slight sheds, run up for the accommodation of the queens and the chief ministers. It is worthy of notice also that, in a favourable position to view all that passed, was erected a similar mandut for the accommodation of the late Mr. Shaw, then British Resident in Mandalay, his assistants, and the Residency Chaplain, the late Rev. J. A. Colbeck. The Resident and Assistant Resident were admitted in full uniform, wearing their shoes and swords, and it was thought that at length a solution of the great shoe-question had been arrived at, for though in the outer court this dignity had always been allowed them, the fact that later on they saw the king not very far off roused hopes of an audience at a remote date with similar appendages. But alas, the hopes were vain.

Punctually at twelve the procession left the palace gates. At the head of the cortège came the late king's wan, a huge palanquin borne on men's shoulders. Close upon it came

six elephants, in royal purple and gold housings, and after them two richly caparisoned ponies. Following these were three of the mingyis and a wundauk, the fourth chief minister, the Laungshwe being too old and feeble to appear. Then came the band, called byaing-daung, on such occasions, playing an ancient royal *miserere*, and after it a great crowd of the minor officials, wearing baungs, white official hats. Behind these came a number of men and women bearing the regalia and the utensils of the royal dead, the crown, the heavy court dress, the gold betel box, the spittoon, the henthā, and the rest. Then came an empty coffin, overlaid with scarlet velvet and plates of gold, and immediately behind it the body in a ta-nyin, or hammock of white velvet, attached to a bamboo swathed in red velvet, across which was thrown a white velvet covering spangled with gold. To the ta-nyin were attached two long cloths, sanda-ya-mya, held by a multitude of queens, princesses, and exceedingly young princes (all the older ones being in jail). Above were the eight white umbrellas, and over the Sinbyumè, the chief mourner, were held three of the same royal colour. Her three daughters, one of whom, the Supayalat, became Thibaw Min's queen, were shaded by bright yellow htis, a colour which ranks even over gold. Thus they proceeded to the bamboo enclosure. Then it was announced that the new king, Thibaw Min, was coming, having just received the beit-theit, been anointed by the Brahmin Pōnnas. He appeared shortly, seated in a lofty wan, at each of the four corners of which crouched a maiden with bowed head and clasped hands, the whole being carried on the shoulders of forty men. Preceding him was his bodyguard of twelve pages all dressed alike and armed with double-barrelled breechloaders in red serge cases. The Shwe nan-yin payā, the new possessor of the golden throne, remained for half an hour, looking very ill at ease, and little inclined to inspect the splendid spectacle before him. Then he gave the order for the last rites, and in accordance with custom returned immediately to the palace. The actual ceremony of burial was now concluded with as little ceremony as previously there had been superabundance of it, and in a very short time the yahans, of whom there had been a great multitude

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present, were superintending the carrying off of the 108 (representing the number of divisions in the foot of the Lord Buddha, and the beads on the rosary) heaps of alms piled up in great mountains in a long shed to the east of the mausoleum. This was the last of the pious king, Maung Lun, Mindon Min, the Convener of the Fifth Great Synod.

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The following is the substance of a funeral dirge sung in Mandalay by a Rangoon man whose wife had died in the royal city:—

Gone, gone art thou, sweet wife; gone far away,
Fair still and charming, stretched on thy cold bier,
As erst thou wert upon that joyous day
When first I wed thee; gladsome brought thee here,
And joyed to think that thou wert mine. Ah me!
The butterfly's silk wings are shred; no more,
Ne'er more to rest upon thy head, Mah Meit—
Sweet name for wife: "affectionate." Deplore
Her death ye nats that rule forests and streams,
The hills and vales, and greater ye who guard
The sacred law, the holy shrines, the beams
Of silent moon, and sunlight baking hard
The hot-scorched earth, not scorched more and seared
Than is the parchment of my tortured heart.
Nay, bear with me, good neighbours. Be not feared.
I am not mad. The nat-so hath no part
Of me or mine. The spawife sure hath said it.

Ay, thou wert mine when last I trod the earth,
Ere yet, all sinful, I was born as man,
And yet again, in yet another birth,
I'll claim thee; when mayhap a happier kan,
A fairer sum of merit, hardly won,
Will lead us on, linked-armed, to linked death,
That so progressing, joyful we may run
Through all life's changes, and with single breath,
Through heavens and zān and rupa, we may bound
To Ne'ban, blissful home of rest. So mote it be!

Alas, thou wert from Hanthawaddy's plains,
And were we there, where thou so fain hadst stayed,
A stately pomp had honoured thy remains,
In silk and velvet wound, with gilded shade
Of wide umbrella's pride, and regal spire
Had towered to the skies, all seemingly draped
With flowing cloths and princesses' attire,
Such as now thou dost wear, from earth escaped

On learning this remarkable fact, one will feel no doubt inclined to say: 'Quite so, but since the cycle is formed in a logical fashion by the application of the phenomenon of harmonics, is it not possible that the construction might also have been discovered elsewhere than in China, quite independently; in other words is it not possible that it may have a multiple origin?'

No doubt that would not be impossible in itself. But what is hardly believable is that not only should the structure of these scales be founded everywhere on the cycle of the blown fifths, but that all should start from the same fundamental note, that of the *houang tchoing* of 732 vibrations; which brings us back to the same conclusion that, not only the relative structure of the scale, but also the absolute pitch of the notes is the same in all cases considered. This circumstance eliminates the hypothesis of a series of coincidences: One is certainly dealing here with intercourse between people and people. For all we know, this intercourse may apply to the musical scales of prehistoric China, of Siam, of Burma, of Cambodia, to those of the African xylophones, of the pan-pipes of the Incas, to those of certain Melanesian, Polynesian and present-day Brazilian tribes. And it is intercourse of the same kind which one must concede, by virtue of the same arguments, to explain the Javano-Balineae scales; as we believe we have demonstrated by means of a number of measurements of sounds *De Toonhoog van Bali II*, Figures I-V and VII-XIX. It has been proved that the influence of the Chinese metrological basis, corresponding to the *houang tchoing*—230 mm.—was used or is still used, everywhere independently of musical instruments and scales, in an enormous territory, stretching from Europe on the one side to South America on the other. Von Hornbostel, *Ueber einige Pausen am Nordost-brasilien* (in Th-Koch, Grunberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*), 1910; *id.*, *Ueber ein akustisches Kriterium für Kulturzusammenhänge* (in the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1911, p. 601 sqq.); *id.*, A brief summary of the theory of the blown fifths (in *Anthropos*, Vol. XIV/XV, p. 569-570), 1919-20; *id.*, An article treating with the metrical norm in the *Pater Schmidt Festschrift*, which will very soon appear. Recently appeared under the title *Die Massnorm als Kulturgeschichtliches Forschungsmittel*.

I hope those who are interested will be able to go farther into the matter with the works mentioned. I feel personally very much inclined to believe that the Burmese scale, whatever it may be now, was at the beginning founded on a pentatonic basis not very much different from the *kung, shang cho, tse, yui* of the ancient Chinese musicologists.

At this point I must draw the distinction between Burmese music as we know it and music which once existed in Burma now lost to us. Of the former the earliest mention was in connection with Mintra Shwehti's investment of Salin circa 1539 A.D. Of the latter the earliest mention was in the reign of Emperor Ta-tsung in 802 A. D. Mr. G. H. Luce says:

* "In 791 K'o-lo-feng's successor, I-mou-hsun, attacked the Mang tribes. At the request of Wei Kao, the Chinese governor of Hsi-ch'uan, he sent a troupe of musicians, including Pyu, which appeared at the T'ang court in 800. This led the Pyu king, Yung-ch'ang or K'un-mo-chang, to send in 801-2 a formal embassy to China via Nan-chao; it included his younger brother (or son)

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Sumandana, lord of the city of Sri, and also 35 musicians. Chinese texts give many details of the mission, and the *Hsin-t'ang-kue* in particular has a long description of Pyu music.⁷¹

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Yung-ch'iang also sent his younger brother, master of the city of Hsi-li-i, Shu-nan-t'o, to bring an offering of the music of their country. When they reached Ch'eng-tu, Wei Kao made a collection of their tunes, and considering their dances and musical instruments to be of unusual interest, he made pictures of them to send to Court. They have twenty-two instruments, made of eight different substances, to wit, metal, shell, string, bamboo, gourd, leather, ivory and horn: of metal, 2; of shell, 1; of string, 7; of bamboo, 2; of gourd, 2; of leather, 2; of ivory 1; and of horn, 2. They have four bells shaped like those of the Kucha players, three inches in circumference, with clappers fastened by leather. They sound them in time with the tune. They have two iron clappers, three inches and a half long, and two inches and a half wide, flat in front, but with leather handles at the back. These and the bells are decorated profusely with steamers of brocade. There are four conch-shells, the largest capable of holding about 1 pint (shêng). There are two flat harps; one is 10 ft. long and its belly is 7 inches wide. It has a phoenix-head with neck 2 ft. 5 in. long. The front is decorated with snake-skin. There are 14 strings. The tuning-pegs are on the neck, facing outwards towards the phoenix-head. The other flat harp has "branching pegs."

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There are two lizard-head zithers. One of them is wholly in the shape of a lizard. It is 4 ft. long, and has four legs; the belly is hollowed out. The back and the front are decorated with lizard skin as far as the shoulder, which turns upward like that of the Chinese lute *Ch'iu*. It is 7 in. broad; the belly is 8 in. broad, and the tail a foot or more long. On the roller in the empty space there is fixed a barrier upon which are stretched nine strings on each side, attached to eighteen pegs. The front of the other zither is decorated with various-coloured flowers; or as an alternative, covered with snake-skin. There is a dragon-head lute (*p'i-p'a*) which resembles those used by the people of Kucha, but the neck is more than 2 ft. 6 in. long, and the belly 6 in. broad. The dragons' head face each other. There are three tuning pegs and three bridges, with strings to correspond. Two of the pegs are on the neck and one on the throat. It has a cover shaped like a lion. There is also a cloud-head guitar shaped like the foregoing; but the face is decorated with snake-skin and the whole surface with ivory bolts. The head is shaped like clouds. On the top of the pegs are flowers shaped like the ideogram . The three strings, the cover

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and the handle (?) are all decorated with snake-skin. The plectrum is carved. It is ornamented like this for dancing in the K'un-lun style. There are two large gourd-lutes, covered with half-gourds all painted and patterned. On the top are added bronze bowls. The lute itself is of bamboo, with snake patterns across the top. It is 3 feet long; its head is bent as though it were making a bow, and is 2 inches long. The belly is tied with cords that go through the bowl and reach the bottom of the gourd. It would hold about 2 pints (*shêng*) of liquid. The big string plays *t'ai-ts'ou*; the next, *ku hsien*. There is a one-stringed gourd-lute made of speckled bamboo. It is not decorated, but a snake's head is carved in the wood. The string is stretched without a tuning-peg, being tied to the neck. There are four bridges, as in the Kucha guitar. The string plays *t'ai-ts'ou*. There are two kinds of small gourd-lute shaped like the big ones, 2 ft. long. The big string plays *nan-lü*, the next *ying-chung*. There are two transverse flutes, one about a foot long. When tested by our *lü*, it is completely out of tune; but when one adds a waxen lion's head over the real head and makes six holes with an ivory tusk, it gives the notes of the *huang-chung-shang* mode, and a full succession of semitones can be played on it. There is another flute to which one adds an elephant's head and it at once plays a scale corresponding to that described in the Flute Treatise *Ti p'u* of Hsün Hsü. Moreover it corresponds with the pitch of bells of the "high second" category. There are two double flutes, 2 ft. 8 in. long, separated by a joint. To left and right of the joint are vent holes. The two parts are hollowed out to the right proportions (?). The left side plays *t'ai-ts'ou*. The three holes at the end of the pipe play *ku-hsien-jui-jin*, and *i-tsê*. The other plays *lin-chung*, while the holes at the end play *nan-lü*, *yingchung* and *ta-lü*. If one carries one's finger to a hole underneath, it makes the *t'ai-ts'ou* of the octave above. The two hollowed furrows and seven holes enable one to play the scales of *huang-chung* and *lin-chung*.

There are two big gourd mouth-organs with 16 pipes, 8 on each side. It is shaped like a phoenix' wings. The largest pipe measures 4 ft. 8½ in., and the rest are of various sizes in proportion, as in an ordinary *shêng*. The pipes are also made to look like phoenix' wings. The tongue [i.e. vibrating "reed"] is made of bamboo which pierces the gourd right through. In high antiquity the instruments were all of wood and varnish. Afterwards metal was used instead for making the tongue (*huang*), and no instruments were any longer made of gourd. The old style survives only in the P'iao country.

They also have two small gourd mouth-organs similar in construction to the big ones. They play the notes of the mode *lin-chung-shang*. There are two three-sided drums shaped like wine-jars, about 2 ft. high, with broad bottoms and pointed tops, seven

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inches above and four below (?). The belly is nowhere larger than the top. It is made with three layers of snake-skin tied on with blue ropes. When they put it down, they do not keep the drum-skin tied on. The sides are painted with pictures of P'iao musicians holding mouth-organs and drums. There are four small drums like our waist-drums in shape, 5 in. long, only 3½ in. broad at the head, stretched with snake-skin. They have ivory nails and other ornaments; they have no handles and are shaken to mark the beat of the music. The "introducers" hold them. There is an ivory mouth-organ, made by piercing a gourd right through. It is lacquered; then two elephant tusks are put in instead of bamboo pipes. Both tusks play the note *ku-hsien*. There is a three horn mouth-organ, also made by piercing a gourd and lacquering it over; it is fitted with three bull's horns, playing one of them *ku-hsien*, the other two *nan-lü*. The horns are sharpened at the bottom and stuck through the gourd. The handle and mouth-piece are both straight. There is a two-horn mouth-organ of similar construction, *ku-hsien*. The gourd-part is ornamented with coloured designs.

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The names of their twelve tunes are:—

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- (i) "Buddha's Seal." In P'iao it is called *mu-t'o-mi*. The natives and Indians sing this song when they minister to the king.
- (ii) "Praise of the *sala* flower." In P'iao it is called *lung-mang-ti*. The natives make clothes of this flower, thinking that it purifies their bodies.
- (iii) "The white dove." In P'iao it is called *ta-tu*. They admire the way in which the bird flies or stops, according to its fancy.
- (iv) "The white crane's rambles." In P'iao it is called *su-man-ti-li*. It says that when it soars it touches the sky and when it walks, it steps sedately.
- (v) "The fighting goat's victory." In P'iao it is called *lai-nai*. Once there was a man who saw two goats fighting on the sea-shore; the stronger thereafter saw the weaker one enter the mountains. The people of the time called it *lai-nai*, which means "the pomp of victory."
- (vi) "The dragon-headed single lute." In P'iao it is called *mi-si-mi*. It has one string, but all the five notes complete: which signifies that a king of kings by his single virtue nourishes ten thousand countries.
- (vii) "Yama concentration." In P'iao it is called *ch's-lan-shih*. It tells how one who quits the world, becomes solitary and quiet.

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The above seven songs, when sung or danced, all follow the *huang-chung-shang* mode.

- (viii) "Sweet Sugarcane King." In P'iao it is called *o-sü-liao*. It says that Buddhists are as sweet as sugarcane, the flavour of which pleases everyone.
- (ix) "Peacock King." In P'iao it is called *t'ao-s'ai*. It tells of the brilliance of its plumage.
- (x) "The wild goose." It says that, flying or standing, these birds are always in pairs: so comrades must all forgather.
- (xi) "Banquet Music." It is called in P'iao *lung-ts'ung-wang-mo*. It says that tunes of peace are excellent for banquets and meeting together.
- (xii) "Washing care away." It is also called "the reed-organ dance." In P'iao it is called *hu-na*. It says that from tune to tune one washes away one's cares and anxieties and this song takes one's fancy.

The above seven tunes are in one or other of the scales of *huang-chung*; one is in *huang-chung shang* (the *i-yüeh* mode); one in *lin-chung shang* (the *hsiao-chih* mode).

The musicians all wear K'un-lun dress, covering their loins with red cotton cloth (*tieh-chao-hsia*) which they call *jung-man*. They wear *chao-hsia* across their shoulders; on their legs and arms they have golden, jewel-studded bracelets; they wear golden head-dresses and ear-rings. They use a string or sash to thread flowers in order to make a headdress. They use two hair-retainers decorated with down. Before the dance begins the "introducers" come forward and explain its meaning. The dance-movements follow the music. The number of dancers used is 2, 4, 6, 8 or 10. They all wear jewelled caps. When the tune is over, they bow. Their songs were translated at fifth hand.

The Emperor Tê Tsung made Shu-nan-t'ô an Officer of the Stables (*t'ai-p'u-ch'ing*), and sent him home. T'ang Tz'u, Governor of K'ai-chou, made an "Eulogy upon the event of the P'iao offering music," which he laid before the Throne.

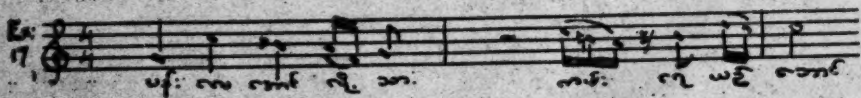
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One wishes that all this had not been lost so completely. Siamese influence is of course much more recent. There were two conquests of Ayudhya (อยุธยา Yodaya); the 1st by Bayinnaung (1551-81 A.D.) and the second by Hsinbyushin (1763-76 A.D.). The latter was the more important because the conqueror not only brought back enormous numbers of prisoners of war but managed to hold Siam in subjection for a few years. Mr. Stewart, writing on the Burmese stage¹ remarked "Entertainers of all sorts were

1. Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, Vol. LXXXVII. No. 4516. The Burmese Stage.

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deported from the conquered country to Burma, and these included actors capable of performing dramas, of which the prime favourite in Siam was the Rama play..” He restricted himself to the stage only. What was true of the entertainers was true also of artists, craftsmen, musicians, sculptors, even games and confectionery. It was at that time that our cultural store-house was filled with Siamese loot. And at that time there lived a remarkable adaptor, creator and preserver of music, in the person of Myawadi-wungyi U Sa (1766-1853 A.D.) whose incredibly long life was filled with literary, dramatic and musical activity. There does not seem to be any kind of song which he has not written. Popular belief attributes to him no less than 200 *patpyos* တံခါး alone.¹ All the *patpyos* in *Enoung Zat* are his. Our most famous *Htumachana thachingan* တေးချင်းတေးခင်း is his. Our present harp with 13 strings instead of 7 was also his. Our *Yodaya* ယိုးဒယား songs owe their establishment as a principal section in our classical repertoire entirely to the tireless adaptation into Burmese of every kind of *Yodaya* song he and his collaborator ဇွဲဒွဲဒွဲသား could lay hands on. If the second conquest of Ayudhya was the single event, U Sa was the single person responsible for the energising of the body of our music by a liberal infusion of Siamese blood. Not content with adapting Siamese melodies, U Sa is reputed to have adapted certain slow measures of Christian sacred music ဆရာတော်တော် which he heard from early Roman Catholic missionaries in the beginning of his ဆရာတော်တော် တံခါး. In another ဆရာတော်တော် notice the following phrase:



He was already experimenting with the Western Leading-note. The first B at ဗို is the flattish Burmese seventh, whereas the B's in the following bar at မိ: and ငှာ are really the Western Leading-notes only a semi-tone distant from the Tonic. It is impossible to be certain, but it is highly probable that it was then that an advance from the pentatonic basis was achieved. For even as late as Bodawpaya (1782-1819 A.D.) according to the great harpist U Phoo Gaung, U Sa himself was still playing on a harp with only 7 strings, until his royal master asked him if he could not do better than that, when he fashioned the harp as we know it, with 13 strings and a gamut of nearly 3 octaves.²

Under the circumstances mentioned above it is inevitable that the Siamese scale too came to Burma, to stay. The question is whether the Burmese adopted the Siamese scale or adapted it to

1. In U Nu's ဆရာတော်တော်တော် Sam Mag. July 1939.

2. Although there are only 13 strings, the intermediate notes are obtained by 'stopping' the open strings with the tip of the fore-finger of the left hand.

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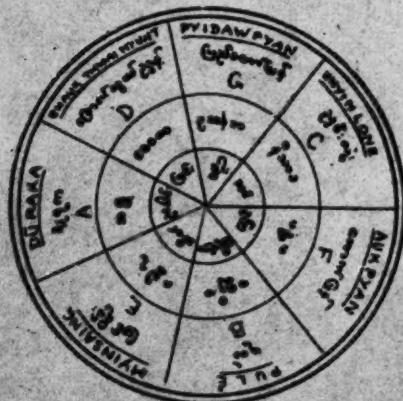
their needs. The only clues that can lead to an answer to this question exist in the chart *La Planche-I* appended to J. Kunst's article. The measurements of the Siamese scale were taken from Stumpf's *Tonsystem und Musik der Siamesen* p. 137; and the measurements of the Burmese scale, presumably the only scientific measurements ever taken, were from Von Hornbostel's *Ueber ein akustisches kriterium für Kulturzusammenhänge*, p. 613. The Siamese scale attracted also the attention of Prof. F. Max Mayer of the Missouri University, who, in his article *Musician's Arithmetic*¹ seemed fully convinced that the Siamese equal tempered 7-tone-scale and the Javanese equal tempered 5-tone-scale with the western chromatic scale were the only equal tempered scales in the world. Kunst, however, refuted that theory towards the end of his article in the *Journal of the Siam Society*:—

"Sometimes it seems as though they meant to create an equigraded scale (5 x 240 C.), but most of the scales measured had one degree greater than the others. [Kunst's *De Toonkunst van Bali*, Vol. II, tables II, IV and V] in conformity with the hypothesis propounded above.

"Furthermore, the famous tonal plan of the *batel* is based—and the *Sléndro* too—on the particular position in the scale of intervals having different dimensions, in other words: an equigraded scale (of which one uses all the tones in one and the same composition, as always with the *Sléndro*), is, if I am not mistaken, incompatible with the pure nature of Javanese melody."

That disposed of the theory of the Javanese equal tempered 5-tone scale. Unfortunately, Kunst did not deal with the Siamese scale at all beyond supplying the measurements. And of these measurements, those of the Burmese scale by Hornbostel certainly look as though it was an equal tempered 7-tone scale. There was no sign of the existing sharpened Fourth.

Diagram 1.



° Diagrams of changes of key prescribed by the classics go right round the octave in a succession of underfifths without such means as the black keys of the piano [See Diagram 1]. Indeed U Ba Choe mentioned, in his *သံသေ(၇)ဝံး သေဉ်း* one song (long forgotten), a *kyoh* သံသေသေသေ သေဉ်းသေဉ်းသေဉ်း-၇သံ သေဉ်း which modulates (?) into all the 7 keys.²

1. University of Missouri Studies, Vol. IV, 1929.

2. U Ba Choe has rediscovered it, and when we investigated its changes of key on the piano, we found that it went the round of 12 keys; C—F—B flat—so on, back to C major.

BURMESE MUSIC.

If ever true modulation into all the 7 keys were possible, it must have been at the time of U Sa, employing some such scale as Hornbostel's *échelle birmane*. Was the Burmese scale pentatonic in origin? Did it adapt itself to an equal tempered seven-tone scale from Siam towards the end of the 18th century? Did the intervals then become less and less equal until they nearly approximated to the Chinese scale of Mr. K. C. Hsiao, presently to be quoted, with an indeterminate Fourth and Seventh? How did this indeterminate Fourth and Seventh come about? These are questions to be settled by future more competent research. I shall however quote the very significant remarks of K. C. Hsiao on the present day Chinese scale.¹

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"....The true cause seems to lie in the incorrect intonation of modern Chinese instruments, incorrect in the sense that the intonation has deviated from the theoretical intention of the scale construction.

Let us take up the keyless-flute and find out what sort of scale it produces. This flute is virtually the standard pitch pipe² of the Chinese ensemble..... By careful experiment it has been found that the fourth and the seventh of the scale thereon are both "neutral," that is, the fourth is neither a half-tone above the third as in the European diatonic major scale, nor a full tone above it as in the theoretical Chinese heptatonic scale, but is just about mid-way between the third and the fifth, and the seventh is similarly mid-way between the sixth and the octave. It becomes at once clear why Chinese instruments sound impersonal or neutral or out of tune.....

The true reason for the incorrect intonation of the existing Chinese instruments cannot be stated with absolute certainty. The most probable reason is this: During the Yuan dynasty both the neutral and sharp F were used..... But the production of both these chromatic tones could not be done on the flute except with the assistance of special key devices unknown to the Chinese instrument makers or with boring the second and fifth holes counting from the lower end, larger than the rest. It was possible at that time when both f and f-sharp were in use to bore the holes on the Chinese flute so as to enable the player to produce the notes when desired by a definite system of fingering such as now used by western flute players. But with the coming of the Ming dynasty, this whole system transgressing the pentatonic scale was officially abolished.

Musicians then and therefore did not have to bother at all about producing f and f-sharp, and following the law of supply and demand, the flute makers undertook to make flutes that could not produce either f or f-sharp accurately, but had more uniformity and symmetry in their appearance by boring all the finger holes of the same size and with a minimum variation of distances from each other³..... If a player who had bought the flute cared to produce all the tones on the instrument, what he got was naturally a scale with neutral fourth and seventh, agreeing neither with the European diatonic (with the perfect), nor the Chinese heptatonic scale (with the augmented fourth). The same thing was then applied to the playing of stringed instruments..... to be in tune with the wind instruments.

1. Chinese scale theories. Appendix 6 to *The Musician's Arithmetic* by Prof. Max Meyer in the University of Missouri Studies, Vol. IV, 1929, pp. 115-6.

2. Like the Burmese oboe 3 (Am)

3. See Diagrams 2 and 3 of the Burmese oboe 3 (Am) and tables 3 and 6.

.....Nowadays in certain localities of China, the performance of music has come to be looked down on as a menial and unscholarly vocation.... although this aversion is not universal in China, music has been intellectually neglected for a long time. As a result music has become unmusical in China. And this in turn has increased the contempt in which it is held by the educated classes. It is a vicious circle.".....

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I would not have allowed myself to be thus catapulted into the problem of the Burmese scale were it not so necessary to emphasise the very sharp line of demarcation between classical evidence and musical evidence. Too long have we taken shelter behind the façade of ancient Indian culture.

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With regard to the most important real evidence of the written records, what have we to rely on? Only one MS in *parabeik* form—*Naralikka*. U San Win himself pointed out that no other Burmese work on Burmese music had ever been known to exist. Until one has seen that *parabeik* one would be foolish to talk about the Burmese scale with any conviction. The best that can be done is to proceed from the known to the unknown and talk of clues rather than discoveries.

If it were possible, a scientific survey of the principal Burmese musical instruments should establish the one Burmese scale which is common to the whole country, or rather to which all the scales all over the country approximate. Everything about us is approximate. Our tunes, having no notation, are always at variance. Western people talk of our lack of method. Yet....

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"The elements of tone and rhythm have been combined and recombined, and have left the theory a tangled mass of forgotten systems and the practice an ineradicable instinct. The veneration for the past because of its remoteness, the mental attitude which looks away from the categories of time and space and turns its attention upon the essence of the thing itself, the faith which links the present closely with the time when the gods walked the earth and still points to the visible imprints of their feet—all these have united to personify every element of their music, and piously to preserve names and attitudes which have long lost their meaning; so that much of the theory is clear only to those who can read myth. Nor on the practical side has extemporization, as it is understood, been learned in a day, nor even in the life-time of any individual.....But it is age-long practice rather than memory which has placed at the command of the best singers that inexhaustible wealth of variation with which they make a melody their own, that gift of improvisation which takes on an epic quality, as all crafts do that are handed down from father to son. To walk on the Old Trunk Road is, it has been said, to step into a chapter of Genesis; and in the same way we catch, in these immemorial cadences, the very spirit of the rhapsodists of Homer. Their music is old, but with an age like the eternal youth of Greece, not with a second childhood like the stereotyped formulas of the Troubadours."

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Now comes the time to discuss the technical remarks of Mr. Paul Edmonds and Mr. P. A. Mariano mentioned at the beginning of this article. In Chap. VII of his *Peacocks and Pagodas* (Routledge, 1924) Paul Edmonds says:

Hla Tin having fixed up his mandolin proceeded to play me a tune. The tune, he said, was the introduction to the "baw lè," and the "baw lè" is the tune to which all songs of a sad and plaintive character are commonly sung—though there is nothing about the tune that sounds sad to the western ears¹. The short introduction was in two parts, the lower being a kind of rough counterpoint². It is played at the beginning, between every verse, and at the end. I wrote it down on paper in western notation after several repetitions, (See Example 4), and upon examining the upper part, or tune, was interested to find that it was apparently in the pentatonic scale. I then successfully transcribed the "baw lè" tune proper, (See Example 6), but this was, I found, approximately in our ordinary major scale, and it was difficult to say for certain whether or not the tune had originally been pentatonic³.

Paul Edmonds also examined the xylophone (*pattalar*), the drum-circle (*saingwaing*), and the gong-circle (*kyi-waing*) and said:

The *pattala*, which seemed to be in the key of C, had an eight-note scale; but at first I was puzzled to classify it, since in the upper octave the note B was nearer to B-flat than to B-natural, whereas in the lower octave it was the other way about. How to account for an approximate B-flat in one octave and an approximate B-natural in the octave in the same instrument was a problem⁴. The note F in both octaves was indeterminate. It seemed to be about midway between F and F-sharp⁵.

This first suggested to me what I now believe to be the true explanation, which is that the pentatonic scale is the foundation and that notes have been roughly inserted in the two gaps between E and G and between A and C in order to make the scale approximate to the Western major scale. I was not sure of this at that time, but subsequent investigations confirmed it.

I wish Paul Edmonds had left a full account of his investigations. It would be a real service not only to future research but also to Burmese music. While heartily agreeing with him that the pentatonic scale was the foundation of the Burmese scale, I hesitate

1. No wonder. Hla Tin has spoilt the plaintive part of the tune with a variation: (See Example 7) the last beat of the third bar leading down to the tonic in the beginning of the bar following. These five notes are characteristic of the *baw-lè* cadence, and of the original Burmese tonality. Harmonically, they form the arpeggio of the tonic major chord with added sixth like the arpeggio ending to Grieg's *To the Spring* in F-sharp major.

2. P.E. apparently here refers to Hla Tin's thumb work. When playing the mandolin a Burman does not use the plectrum. Forefinger and thumb are employed, the latter to strike an occasional lower octave or the Fourth or the Fifth, or to help the forefinger along with the melody. The result perhaps often sounds like rough counterpoint. But the tune was certainly not in two parts. The division is of labour, not thematic.

3. It could not be. *Baw lè* is a very much later invention attributed to Hlaing-Hteik-Khaung-Tin (1833-1875 A.D.) an excellent summary of whose life translated by Nyl Nyl from the excellent series of short biographies of famous Burmese authoritaries by Ma Ma Gyi, appeared in the *World of Books* Nos. 136-137. U Thein Han (Zaw Gyi) points out the germ of the *baw-lè* tune in the concluding part of a *patpyo* "ya-gon-myaing-gyar" attributed by some to Myawadiwungyi and by others to Hlaing-Hteik-Khaung-Tin's own mother Ma Mya Gale.

4. I would blame its maker. My *pattalar* reveals just the opposite.

5. It is still there.

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basis of invidious distinctions. Persons of means are esteemed more for the socially valued uses to which they may put their money, such as charity, ceremonial activities, and support of the clergy, than for sheer richness or consumption.

Economic Change

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The changing pattern of Tadagale's economic life may be described from the point of view of shift from a once largely subsistence economy to one based more upon commodity production and exchange. In discussing this shift, the general trends are best indicated if we focus upon Lower Burma rather than upon Tadagale exclusively. It is desirable to make this large area our unit because pertinent data are available for it, whereas historical information specific to the village is somewhat scant and fragmentary. The term "Lower Burma" is an administrative and geographical one. It comprises about 81,000 square miles and a population of some 9 millions, four of the administrative divisions in the highly fertile, deltaic 'rice-bowl' of Burma.

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1. Background. The trend from a relatively self-sufficient subsistence economy, with little dependence upon money, to a more commercialized economy coincides with the coming of British colonial rule in Burma. Our historical perspective thus extends over a period of about 150 years. Within this span of time, profound economic change occurred in Lower Burma. Here we cannot give a detailed account of events from decade to decade, but must limit ourselves to a brief consideration of the major trends.

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In pre-British Lower Burma, villages consisted of what might be called islands of clearance in a big jungle. In these settlements the Burmese peasants lived by cultivation of paddy and vegetable gardens. Individual small holdings were the rule, and the size of the plot depended almost entirely upon need. No incentive existed to clear and cultivate land beyond the requirements of household subsistence and taxes, paid in kind, to the representative of the Burmese Crown. Cotton, from the dry zone of central Burma, was spun and woven into cloth, and garments were made in the local community. Housing was of a simple bamboo and thatch type, made of materials available locally. The bullock cart provided transport on the relatively few occasions that it was necessary for the Lower Burma villager to travel distances that could not be walked. Contact between villages was minimized by the expenses of intervening, uncleared jungle country. In Tadagale, for example, one of our oldest informants was able to recall the period of his youth, around 1885, when jungle clearance and settlement was still taking place, bringing Tadagale into closer communication with other communities in the area. Local craftsmen provided the villagers with simple utensils, tools and implements.

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When British colonialism took over, money came to dominate over barter. Taxation was ordered to be paid in money. The Burmese cultivator was encouraged to clear the heavy jungle, cultivate more land, sell surpluses of paddy to commercial millers, and spend his money on attractive manufactured goods imported from England, which were on display in the town shops and bazaars. Moneylenders, some of them Burmese, but especially Indians of the moneylending Chettiar caste from Madras, who could enter Burma freely, were at hand to loan money in fairly unlimited amounts to the Burmese peasants. Thus the latter could finance the expansion of their cultivation. Rates of interest charged were unregulated, and commonly ranged from 10% to 35% per year. The Burmese peasant was an easy victim: he was, at first, entirely unsophisticated in money

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
Indians

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within the past two or three decades. In almost every way, they form a village within the village. They are spatially clustered together, apart from the Burmese. Their living is earned by dairying; milk from their cattle and water buffaloes is sold in Rangoon, for cash, to Muslim restaurants. Since the Burmese do not consume milk, the Indian dairymen find no market for their product in the community. The only economic relationship between the two groups consists of some exchange of Burmese paddy stalk, when the harvest is over, for animal manure. The Indians use the paddy stalk as fodder for their animals, while the Burmese use animal manure to some extent for their not very fertile garden and rice lands.

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The Indians being Hindus, the Burmese Buddhists, the two groups have no basis for common participation in religious or ceremonial life. Nor is there more than a negligible tendency towards intermarriage; our census showed two cases.

As shown by our figures on income, the Indians as a group are far more prosperous than the Burmese. Although the Burmese seem to realize this, they tend to phrase the matter not so much in terms of greater wealth of the Indians as in terms of how little the Indian spends of his income. To the average Burmese of the village, the Indian is something of a lesser breed who lives on next to nothing and so grows rich.

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Throughout the course of research in Tadagale, an effort was made from time to time to study intergroup feelings and attitudes, but this was a subject on which informants who were quite ready to discuss almost any other matter were loath to speak. The Burmese seemed to know little (or at least so professed) about the ways of the Indians; the Indians were very tight-lipped concerning the Burmese.

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It was towards the close of our work in Tadagale that certain events occurred which brought out, in sharp focus, the nature of Burmese-Indian relations and attitudes, and completely broke the silence maintained earlier. At this point, however, some digression is necessary to provide a background for understanding what took place.

In 1949-50, the internal disturbances which have beset Burma since the end of World War II were at their height. During this time the maintenance of law and order sank to a very low point; robbery, armed and unarmed, was rampant. Tadagale was robbed three times within the preceding year, according to informants. On such occasions, bandits entered the village, fired their guns into the air to frighten the defenseless villagers, and then proceeded to tie up some villagers and remove their money and other valuables. Anyone who resisted was beaten. According to villagers, the police, located about half a mile away, could not be depended upon for protection or for action once a crime occurred, for the bandits were better organized and armed than the police, making the latter extremely reluctant to take any action.

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Some early evidences of distrust between Indians and Burmese appeared about the middle of our research period, when an Indian dairyman stated that he was convinced that the bandits who periodically invaded Tadagale had Burmese collaborators in the village. He based his belief on the fact that the bandits seemed always to find their way directly to the homes of the more prosperous inhabitants, which knowledge, he claimed, could be gotten only from villagers.

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 API Burma
Burmese AP4
Indians

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On February 18, 1950, on arriving in the village early in the morning for our usual daily period of observation and interviewing concerning village life, we were immediately struck by the absence of villagers going to and fro in their daily tasks and by the deadly silent atmosphere pervading the whole village scene. On the veranda of one house located just across the bridge leading into the village a large number of people was assembled. An informant related that on the previous evening, about eleven o'clock, some fifteen armed bandits carrying automatic weapons as well as small arms came via Farundaung Creek and invaded the village. Firing their guns into the air to frighten the people, they proceeded directly to the house where the large gathering was now assembled and demanded Rs. 1000 in cash and ten ticals of gold. When the head of the household protested that he did not have that much, they took him to the ricefields, bound his feet, and shot him to death. They also visited another home and made demands upon the woman who was the head of the household. When money was not forthcoming, they tied up the members of the family, struck the woman on the head, and removed all the clothing in the house except that being worn. Although the police were notified immediately after this attack upon the village, they did not come to investigate until many hours later. Villagers expected no real assistance from the authorities, whom they considered incompetent and afraid of bandits. The village headman said that although he suspected that there were accomplices among the villagers, he was afraid to name these suspects to the police, lest revenge be taken upon himself and his family.

This event, climaxing a series of attacks upon the village within the past year, set in motion a number of actions which are interesting for what they reveal of the social structure of the village as well as for the light they throw on intergroup relations.

The village headman, who had spoken of the need for the community to arm itself, and of the high cost of doing so, decided that a village meeting should be called to consider the matter.

A few days after the murder described above, the meeting was called. Early one morning the village crier went through the community sounding a gong and summoning the people to the school-house. Within an hour some fifty villagers arrived. As the group slowly gathered, several men came to tell the headman that their gardening or other work was urgent and asked to be excused.

As the meeting began, the elders sat on the veranda of the school-house, surrounding the headman, who sat at the schoolmaster's desk. A good deal of informal discussion took place between the elders and the headman before the meeting was called to order, and it was at this point that actual decision making was doubtless done.

The headman opened the meeting formally by addressing the assembled group, telling them that he was sure they were tired of the attacks upon the village and that they wanted to take action; that there was no future for them so long as they remained defenseless; and that once the rainy season came, it would not even be possible to flee during an attack. Although he could have made a decision in consultation with the elders, the headman told the gathering, he had called a general meeting because he wanted to be sure the community would support him in any course of action he might take.

The headman now proposed that a fund be raised for the purchase of arms and a plan formulated for defending the village. Since the idea of a common

14: Brant E-5 (1949-50) 1954 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4
Indians

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621 consider, because they did not want to lose the Indians as customers for
563 their paddy stalk and as a source of manure for their gardens and fields.

The headman of Tadagale, when queried as to the reasons for the departure of the Indians, shrugged his shoulders and said simply that they were afraid, despite the plans for village defense, that their animals might be injured in the event of any fighting between villagers and bandits.

Within a few days, the Indians of Tadagale had all departed; and in the vacant spaces where their houses had stood, the Burmese were eagerly at work erecting buildings of their own.

Social Change

● 175 Prior to effective British rule in Lower Burma (about 1830), the local
631 autonomous unit was the village circle, consisting of several villages under
622 the authority of a headman. The office of headman seems to have been hereditary
626 in fact, although elections were held. That is to say, headmen tended to be
elected in a particular lineage. Rule was through personal relationship
between the headman and the villagers. Under the circle headman was a council
of elders, appointed by him, one from each village in the circle. Disputes
were almost entirely settled by arbitration and compromise, rather than with
any concern over the abstract legal right and wrong of the case.

621 Within the village, a system called 'ten-house heads' was operative.
This system appears to have been operative through British times, but at least
since 1948 has lost effectiveness. Tadagale houses are strung out along a
main path, and the ten-house division is such that the houses belonging to
one group are mostly contiguous. The head of each ten-house section acted
as a kind of deputy to the headman and sat on the council of elders.

175 With the coming of British rule, much of this changed. They established
631 a hierarchical system, in which there were, in descending order of size,
622 nation, division, district, township, village circle, and village. All
officials at each level were appointed from the capital, even down to the
village level, where the headman was made an appointed civil servant. He
was paid on a percentage basis of his total tax collections and fines levied.
The circle headman had police power and judicial authority in petty crimes.

175 A judicial system was introduced by the British to replace the old in-
692 formal arbitration. With an almost total disregard for indigenous institutions
and customs, the British established a territorial system based upon law. The
loosely structured and informal system of old gradually broke down.

669 Early in 1948 Burma gained her independence. Since that time the country
631 has been in a state of disorganization. The civil strife has brought about
182 an almost complete breakdown of administrative function on many levels.
Certainly the ties of the village with higher units have been curtailed.
One indication of this is the fact that the headman no longer submits reports
with any degree of regularity to higher echelons, as was required under British
rule. Even the local ten-house heads council has largely ceased to function.
It exists, but is scarcely used.

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000 situation with regard to other nations, its climate, its occupations. It is a great subject that I cannot go into. I wish to take all such things as I find them, and to discuss only the effect of the religion upon the courage of the people, upon its fighting capabilities. That religion may have a very serious effect one way or the other, no one can doubt. I went through the war of annexation, from 1885 to 1889, and from it I will draw my examples.

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721 When we declared war in Upper Burma, and the column advanced up the river in November 1885, there was hardly any opposition. A little fight there was at the frontier fort of Minhla, but beyond that nothing. The river that might have been blocked was open; the earthworks had no cannon, the men no guns. Such a collapse was never seen. There was no organization, no material, no money. The men wanted officers to command and teach them; the officers wanted authority and ability to command. The people looked to their rulers to repel the invaders; the rulers looked to the people. There was no common intelligence or will between them. Everything was wanting; nothing was as it should be. And so Mandalay fell without a shot, and King Thibaw, the young, incapable, kind-hearted king, was taken into captivity.

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721 That was the end of the first act, brief and bloodless. For a time the people were stupefied. They could not understand what had happened; they could not guess what was going to happen. They expected that the English would soon retire, and that then their own government would reorganize itself. Meanwhile they kept quiet.

V

WAR

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It is curious to think how peaceful the country really was from November 1885 till June 1886. And then the trouble came. The people had by that time, even in the wild forest villages, begun to understand that we wanted to stay, that we did not intend going away unless forced to. They felt that it was of no further use looking to Mandalay for help. We had begun, too, to consider about collecting taxes, to interfere with the simple machinery of local affairs, to show that we meant to govern. And as the people did not desire to be governed—certainly not by foreigners, at least—they began to organize resistance. They looked to their local leaders for help, and, as too often these local governors were not very capable men, they sought, as all people have done, the assistance of such men of war as they could find—brigands, and freelances, and the like—and put themselves under their orders. The whole country rose, from Bhamo to Minhla, from the Shan Plateau to the Chin Mountains. All Upper Burma was in a passion of insurrection, a very fury of rebellion against the usurping foreigners. Our authority was confined to the range of our guns. Our forts were attacked, our convoys ambushed, our steamers fired into on the rivers. There was no safety for an Englishman or a native of India, save within the lines of our troops, and it was soon felt that these troops were far too few to cope with the danger. To overthrow King Thibaw was easy, to subdue the people a very different thing.

It is almost impossible to describe the state of Upper Burma in 1886. It must be remembered that the central government was never very strong

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—in fact, that beyond collecting a certain amount of taxes, and appointing governors to the different provinces, it hardly made itself felt outside Mandalay and the large river towns. The people to a great extent governed themselves. They had a very good system of village government, and managed nearly all their local affairs. But beyond the presence of a governor, there was but little to attach them to the central government. There was, and is, absolutely no aristocracy of any kind at all. The Burmese are a community of equals, in a sense that has probably never been known elsewhere. All their institutions are the very opposite to feudalism. Now, feudalism was instituted to be useful in war. The Burmese customs were instituted that men should live in comfort and ease during peace; they were useless in war. So the natural leaders of a people, as in other countries, were absent. There were no local great men; the governors were men appointed from time to time from Mandalay, and usually knew nothing of their charges; there were no rich men, no large landholders—not one. There still remained, however, one institution that other nations have made useful in war, namely, the organization of religion. For Buddhism is fairly well organized—certainly much better than ever the government was. It has its heads of monasteries, its Gaing-dauks, its Gaing-oks, and finally the Thathanabaing, the head of the Burmese Buddhism. The overthrow of King Thibaw had not injured any of this. This was an organization in touch with the whole people, revered and honoured by every man and woman and child in the country. In this

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own soul perfect. This is the first of all things, and comes before any other consideration. Of the virtues that only war can create and nourish this teaching knows nothing. Be pure and kind-hearted, full of charity and compassion, and so you may do good to others. These are the vows the Buddhist monks make, these are the vows they keep; and so it happened that all that great organization was useless to the patriot fighter, was worse than useless, for it was against him. The whole spectacle of Burma in those days, with the country seething with strife, and the monks going about their business calmly as ever, begging their bread from door to door, preaching of peace, not war, of kindness, not hatred, of pity, not revenge, was to most foreigners quite inexplicable. They could not understand it. I remember a friend of mine with whom I went through many experiences speaking of it with scorn. He was a cavalry officer, 'the model of a light cavalry officer'; he had with him a squadron of his regiment, and we were trying to subdue a very troubled part of the country.

We were camping in a monastery, as we frequently did—a monastery on a hill near a high golden pagoda. The country all round was under the sway of a brigand leader, and sorely the villagers suffered at his hands now that he had leapt into unexpected power. The villages were half abandoned, the fields untilled, the people full of unrest; but the monasteries were as full of monks as ever; the gongs rang, as they ever did, their message through the quiet evening air; the little boys were taught there just the same; the trees were watered and the gardens swept as if there were no change

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WAR

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at all—as if the king were still on his golden throne, and the English had never come; as if war had never burst upon them. And to us, after the very different scenes we saw now and then, saw and acted in, these monks and their monasteries were difficult to understand. The religion of the Buddha thus professed was strange.

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‘What is the use,’ said my friend, ‘of this religion that we see so many signs of? Suppose these men had been Jews or Hindus or Mussulmans, it would have been a very different business, this war. These yellow-robed monks, instead of sitting in their monasteries, would have pervaded the country, preaching against us and organizing. No one organizes better than an ecclesiastic. We should have had them leading their men into action with sacred banners, and promising them heaven hereafter when they died. They would have made Ghazis of them. Any one of these is a religion worth having. But what is the use of Buddhism? What do these monks do? I never see them in a fight, never hear that they are doing anything to organize the people. It is, perhaps, as well for us that they do not. But what is the use of Buddhism?’

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So, or somewhat like this, spoke my friend, speaking as a soldier. Each of us speaks from our own standpoint. He was a brilliant soldier, and a religion was to him a sword, a thing to fight with. That was one of the first uses of a religion. He knew nothing of Buddhism; he cared to know nothing, beyond whether it would fight. If so, it was a good religion in its way. If not, then not.

V

WAR

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the law, the unchangeable law that man is subject to. There is no good thing but peace, no sin like strife and war.' That is what the followers of the great teacher would tell the peasant yearning for help to strike a blow upon the invaders. The law is the same for all. There is not one law for you and another for the foreigner; there is not one law to-day and another to-morrow. Truth is for ever and for ever. It cannot change even to help you in your extremity. Think of the English soldier and the Burmese peasant. Can there be anywhere a greater contrast than this?

Truly this is not a creed for a soldier, not a creed for a fighting-man of any kind, for what the soldier wants is a personal god who will always be on his side, always share his opinions, always support him against everyone else. But a law that points out unalterably that right is always right, and wrong always wrong, that nothing can alter one into the other, nothing can ever make killing righteous and violence honourable, that is no creed for a soldier. And Buddhism has ever done this. It never bent to popular opinion, never made itself a tool in the hands of worldly passion. It could not. You might as well say to gravity, 'I want to lift this stone; please don't act on it for a time,' as expect Buddhism to assist you to make war. Buddhism is the unalterable law of righteousness, and cannot ally itself with evil, cannot ever be persuaded that under any circumstances evil can be good.

And so the Burmese peasant had to fight his own fight in 1885 alone. His king was gone, his government broken up, he had no leaders. He had

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60 THE SOUL OF A PEOPLE CH.

721 no god to stand beside him when he fired at the
175 foreign invaders; and when he lay a-dying, with a
701 bullet in his throat, he had no one to open to him
the gates of heaven.

And yet he fought—with every possible discouragement he fought, and sometimes he fought well. It has been thrown against him as a reproach that he did not do better. Those who have said this have never thought, never counted up the odds against him, never taken into consideration how often he did well.

[41] Here was a people—a very poor people of peasants—with no leaders, absolutely none; no aristocracy of any kind, no cohesion, no fighting religion. They had for their leaders outlaws and desperadoes, and for arms old flint-lock guns and soft iron swords. Could anything be expected from this except what actually did happen? And yet they often did well, their natural courage overcoming their bad weapons, their passionate desire of freedom giving them the necessary impulse.

In 1886, as I have said, all Burma was up. Even in the lower country, which we held for so long, insurrection was spreading fast, and troops and military police were being poured in from India.

There is above Mandalay a large trading village—a small town almost—called Shemmaga. It is the river port for a large trade in salt from the inner country, and it was important to hold it. The village lay along the river bank, and about the middle of it, some two hundred yards from the river, rises a small hill. Thus the village was a triangle,

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with the base on the river, and the hill as apex. On the hill were some monasteries of teak, from which the monks had been ejected, and three hundred Ghurkas were in garrison there. A strong fence ran from the hill to the river like two arms, and there were three gates, one just by the hill, and one on each end of the river face.

Behind Shemmaga the country was under the rule of a robber chief called Maung Yaing, who could raise from among the peasants some two hundred or three hundred men, armed mostly with flint-locks. He had been in the king's time a brigand with a small number of followers, who defied or eluded the local authorities, and lived free in quarters among the most distant villages. Like many a robber chief in our country and elsewhere, he was liked rather than hated by the people, for his brutalities were confined to either strangers or personal enemies, and he was open-handed and generous. We look upon things now with different eyes to what we did two or three hundred years ago, but I dare say Maung Yaing was neither better nor worse than many a hero of ours long ago. He was a fairly good fighter, and had a little experience fighting the king's troops; and so it was very natural, when the machinery of government fell like a house of cards, and some leaders were wanted, that the young men should crowd to him, and put themselves under his orders. He had usually with him forty or fifty men, but he could, as I have said, raise five or six times as many for any particular service, and keep them together for a few days. He very soon discovered that he and his men were absolutely no match for our troops.

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In two or three attempts that he made to oppose the troops he was signally worsted, so he was obliged to change his tactics. He decided to boycott the enemy. No Burman was to accept service under him, to give him information or supplies, to be his guide, or to assist him in any way. This rule Maung Yaing made generally known, and he announced his intention of enforcing it with rigour. And he did so. There was a head man of a village near Shemmaga whom he executed because he had acted as guide to a body of troops, and he cut off all supplies from the interior, lying on the roads, and stopping all men from entering Shemmaga. He further issued a notice that the inhabitants of Shemmaga itself should leave the town. They could not move the garrison, therefore the people must move themselves. No assistance must be given to the enemy. The villagers of Shemmaga, mostly small traders in salt and rice, were naturally averse to leaving. This trade was their only means of livelihood, the houses their only homes, and they did not like the idea of going out into the unknown country behind. Moreover, the exaction by Maung Yaing of money and supplies for his men fell most heavily on the wealthier men, and on the whole they were not sorry to have the English garrison in the town, so that they could trade in peace. Some few left, but most did not, and though they collected money, and sent it to Maung Yaing, they at the same time told the English officer in command of Maung Yaing's threats, and begged that great care should be taken of the town, for Maung Yaing was very angry. When he found he could not cause the

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abandonment of the town, he sent in word to say that he would burn it. Not three hundred foreigners, nor three thousand, should protect these lazy, unpatriotic folk from his vengeance. He gave them till the new moon of a certain month, and if the town were not evacuated by that time he declared that he would destroy it. He would burn it down, and kill certain men whom he mentioned, who had been the principal assistants of the foreigners. This warning was quite public, and came to the ears of the English officer almost at once. When he heard it he laughed.

He had three hundred men, and the rebels had three hundred. His were all magnificently trained and drilled troops, men made for war; the Burmans were peasants, unarmed, untrained. He could have defeated three thousand of them, or ten times that number, with his little force, and so, of course, he could if he met them in the open; no one knew that better, by bitter experience, than Maung Yaing. The villagers, too, knew, but nevertheless they were stricken with fear, for Maung Yaing was a man of his word. He was as good as his threat.

One night, at midnight, the face of the fort where the Ghurkas lived on the hill was suddenly attacked. Out of the brushwood near by a heavy fire was opened upon the breastwork, and there was shouting and beating of gongs. So all the Ghurkas turned out in a hurry, and ran to man the breastwork, and the return fire became hot and heavy. In a moment, as it seemed, the attackers were in the village. They had burst in the north gate by the river face, killed the guard on it, and streamed in.

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They lit torches from a fire they found burning, and in a moment the village was on fire. Looking down from the hill, you could see the village rushing into flame, and in the lurid light men and women and children running about wildly. There were shouts and screams and shots. No one who has never heard it, never seen it, can know what a village is like when the enemy has burst in at night. Everyone is mad with hate, with despair, with terror. They run to and fro, seeking to kill, seeking to escape being killed. No one can tell one from another. The bravest man is dismayed. And the noise is like a great moan coming out of the night, pierced with sharp cries. It rises and falls, like the death-cry of a dying giant. It is the most terrible sound in the world. It makes the heart stop.

To the Ghurkas this sight and sound came all of a sudden, as they were defending what they took to be a determined attack on their own position. The village was lost ere they knew it was attacked. And two steamers full of troops, anchored off the town, saw it, too. They were on their way up country, and had halted there that night, anchored in the stream. They were close by, but could not fire, for there was no telling friend from foe.

And before the relief party of Ghurkas could come swarming down the hill, only two hundred yards, before the boats could land the eager troops from the steamers, the rebels were gone. They went through the village and out of the south gate. They had fulfilled their threat and destroyed the town. They had killed the men they had declared they would kill. The firing died away from the fort side,

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and the enemy were gone, no one could tell whither,
into the night.

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Such a scene of desolation as that village was
next day! It was all destroyed—every house. All
the food was gone, all furniture, all clothes, every-
thing, and here and there was a corpse in among
the blackened cinders. The whole countryside was
terror-stricken at this failure to defend those who
had depended on us.

I do not think this was a particularly gallant act,
but it was a very able one. It was certainly war.
It taught us a very severe lesson—more severe than
a personal reverse would have been. It struck terror
in the countryside. The memory of it hampered us
for very long; even now they often talk of it. It was
a brutal act—that of a brigand, not a soldier.

But there was no want of courage. If these men,
inferior in number, in arms, in everything, could do
this under the lead of a robber chief, what would
they not have done if well led, if well trained, if
well armed?

Of desperate encounters between our troops and
the insurgents I could tell many a story. I have
myself seen such fights. They nearly always ended
in our favour—how could it be otherwise?

There was Ta Te, who occupied a pagoda en-
closure with some eighty men, and was attacked by
our mounted infantry. There was a long fight in that
hot afternoon, and very soon the insurgents' ammuni-
tion began to fail, and the pagoda was stormed.
Many men were killed, and Ta Te, when his men
were nearly all dead, and his ammunition quite ex-
pended, climbed up the pagoda wall, and twisted off

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CHAPTER VII

GOVERNMENT

'Fire, water, storms, robbers, rulers—these are the five great evils.'
—*Burmese saying.*

It would be difficult, I think, to imagine anything worse than the government of Upper Burma in its later days. I mean by 'government' the king and his counsellors and the greater officials of the empire. The management of foreign affairs, of the army, the suppression of greater crimes, the care of the means of communication, all those duties which fall to the central government, were badly done, if done at all. It must be remembered that there was one difficulty in the way—the absence of any noble or leisured class to be entrusted with the greater offices. As I have shown in another chapter, there was no one between the king and the villager—no noble, no landowner, no wealthy or educated class at all. The king had to seek for his ministers among the ordinary people, consequently the men who were called upon to fill great offices of state were as often as not men who had no experience beyond the narrow limits of a village.

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VII

GOVERNMENT

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it well, no one can doubt. They taxed themselves without friction, they built their own monastery schools by voluntary effort, they maintained a very high, a very simple, code of morals, entirely of their own initiative.

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All this has passed, or is passing away. The king has gone to a banishment far across the sea, the ministers are either banished or powerless for good or evil. It will never rise again, this government of the king, which was so bad in all it did, and only good in what it left alone. It will never rise again. The people are now part of the British Empire, subjects of the Queen. What may be in store for them in the far future no one can tell, only we may be sure that the past can return no more. And the local government is passing away, too. It cannot exist with a strong government such as ours. For good or for evil, in a few years it, too, will be gone.

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But, after all, these are but forms; the soul is far within. In the soul there will be no change. No one can imagine even in the far future any monk of the Buddha desiring temporal power, or interfering in any way with the government of the people. That is why I have written this chapter, to show how Buddhism holds itself towards the government. With us, we are accustomed to ecclesiastics trying to manage affairs of state, or attempting to grasp the secular power. It is in accordance with our ideals that they should do so. Our religious phraseology is full of such terms as lord and king and ruler and servant. Buddhism knows nothing of any of them. In our religion we

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VIII CRIME AND PUNISHMENT 101

community over the individual—the restraining influence of public opinion and of religion is greater. But even during the years of trouble, the years from 1885 till 1890, when, in the words of the Burmese proverb, 'the forest was on fire and the wild-cat slapped his arm,' there were certain peculiarities about the criminals that differentiated them from those of Europe. You would hear of a terrible crime, a village attacked at night by brigands, a large robbery of property, one or two villagers killed, and an old woman tortured for her treasure, and you would picture the perpetrators as hardened, brutal criminals, lost to all sense of humanity, tigers in human shape; and when you came to arrest them—if by good luck you did so—you would find yourself quite mistaken. One, perhaps, or two of the ringleaders might be such as I have described, but the others would be far different. They would be boys or young men led away by the idea of a frolic, allured by the romance of being a free-lance for a night, very sorry now, and ready to confess and do all in their power to atone for their misdeeds. Nothing, I think, was more striking than the universal confession of criminals on their arrest. Even now, despite the spread of lawyers and notions of law, in country districts accused men always confess, sometimes even they surrender themselves.¹ I have known many such cases. Here is one that happened to myself only the other day.

A man was arrested in another jurisdiction for cattle theft; he was tried there and sentenced to

¹ This was written in 1896. In 1902 it is very different. The increase of all forms of perjury and false evidence is universal.

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ness. Can there be a more valuable knowledge for anyone than this?

In many ways she will act for her husband with vigour and address, and she is not afraid of appearing in his name or her own in law courts, for instance, or in transacting certain kinds of business. She knows that she can do certain business as well as or better than her husband, and she does it. There is nothing more remarkable than the way in which she makes a division of these matters in which she can act for herself, and those in which, if she act at all, it is for her husband.

Thus, as I have said, she will, as regards her own property or her own business, act freely in her own name, and will also frequently act for her husband too. They will both sign deeds, borrow money on joint security, lend money repayable to them jointly. But in public affairs she will never allow her name to appear at all. Not that she does not take a keen interest in such things. She lives in no world apart; all that affects her husband interests her as keenly as it does him. She lives in a world of men and women, and her knowledge of public affairs, and her desire and powers of influencing them, is great. But she learnt long ago that her best way is to act through and by her husband, and that his strength and his name are her bucklers in the fight. Thus women are never openly concerned in any political matters. How strong their feeling is can better be illustrated by a story than in any other way.

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In 1889 I was stationed far away on the north-west frontier of Burma, in charge of some four thousand square miles of territory which had been

newly incorporated. I went up there with the first column that ever penetrated that country, and I remained there when, after the partial pacification of the district, the main body of the troops were withdrawn. It was a fairly exciting place to live in. To say nothing of the fever which swept down men in batches, and the trans-frontier people who were always peeping over to watch a good opportunity for a raid, my own charge simply swarmed with armed men, who seemed to rise out of the very ground—so hard was it to follow their movements—attack anywhere they saw fit, and disappear as suddenly. There was, of course, a considerable force of troops and police to suppress these insurgents, but the whole country was so roadless, so unexplored, such a tangled labyrinth of hill and forest, dotted with sparse villages, that it was often quite impossible to trace the bands who committed these attacks; and to the sick and weary pursuers it sometimes seemed as if we should never restore peace to the country.

The villages were arranged in groups, and over each group there was a headman with certain powers and certain duties, the principal of the latter being to keep his people quiet, and, if possible, protect them from insurgents.

Now, it happened that among these headmen was one named Saw Ka, who had been a free-lance in his day, but whose services were now enlisted on the side of order—or, at least, we hoped so. He was a fighting-man, and rather fond of that sort of exercise; so that I was not much surprised one day when I got a letter from him to say that his villagers

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had pursued and arrested, after a fight, a number of armed robbers, who had tried to lift some of the village cattle. The letter came to me when I was in my court-house, a tent ten feet by eight, trying a case. So, saying I would see Saw Ka's people later, and giving orders for the prisoners to be put in the lock-up, I went on with my work. When my case was finished, I happened to notice that among those sitting and waiting without my tent-door was Saw Ka himself, so I sent to call him in, and I complimented him upon his success. 'It shall be reported,' I said, 'to the Commissioner, who will, no doubt, reward you for your care and diligence in the public service.'

As I talked I noticed that the man seemed rather bewildered, and when I had finished he said that he really did not understand. He was aware, he added modestly, that he was a diligent headman, always active in good deeds, and a terror to dacoits and other evil-doers; but as to these particular robbers and this fighting he was a little puzzled.

I was considerably surprised, naturally, and I took from the table the Burmese letter describing the affair. It began, 'Your honour, I, Maung Saw Ka, headman,' etc., and was in the usual style. I handed it to Saw Ka, and told him to read it. As he read his wicked black eyes twinkled, and when he had finished he said he had not been home for a week.

'I came in from a visit to the river,' he said, 'where I have gathered for your honour some private information. I had not been here five minutes before I was called in. All this the letter

speaks of is news to me, and must have happened while I was away.'

'Then, who wrote the letter?' I asked.

'Ah!' he said, 'I think I know; but I will go and make sure.'

Then Saw Ka went to find the guard who had come in with the prisoners, and I dissolved court and went out shooting. After dinner, as we sat round a great bonfire before the mess, for the nights were cold, Saw Ka and his brother came to me, and they sat down beside the fire and told me all about it.

It appeared that three days after Saw Ka left his village, some robbers came suddenly one evening to a small hamlet some two miles away and looted from there all the cattle, thirty or forty head, and went off with them. The frightened owners came in to tell the headman about it, and in his absence they told his wife. And she, by virtue of the order of appointment as headman, which was in her hands, ordered the villagers to turn out and follow the dacoits. She issued such government arms as she had in the house, and the villagers went and pursued the dacoits by the cattle tracks, and next day they overtook them, and there was a fight. When the villagers returned with the cattle and the thieves, she had the letter written to me, and the prisoners were sent in, under her husband's brother, with an escort. Everything was done as well, as successfully, as if Saw Ka himself had been present. But if it had not been for the accident of Saw Ka's sudden appearance, I should probably never have known that this exploit was due to his wife; for she was

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175 acting for her husband, and she would not have been
622 pleased that her name should appear.
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'A good wife,' I said to Saw Ka.

'Like many,' he answered.

462 But in her own line she has no objection to
publicity. I have said that nearly all women work,
and that is so. Married or unmarried, from the age
of sixteen or seventeen, almost every woman has
some occupation besides her own duties. In the
higher classes she will have property of her own to
manage; in the lower classes she will have some
trade. I cannot find that in Burma there have ever
been certain occupations told off for women in which
they may work, and others tabooed to them. As
there is no caste for the men, so there is none for
the women. They have been free to try their hands
at anything they thought they could excel in, with-
out any fear of public opinion. But nevertheless,
as is inevitable, it has been found that there are
certain trades in which women can compete success-
fully with men, and certain others in which they
cannot. And these are not quite the same as in the
West. We usually consider sewing to be a feminine
462 occupation. In Burma, there being no elaborately
294 cut and trimmed garments, the amount of sewing
done is small, but that is usually done by men.
Women often own and use small hand-machines,
but the treadles are always used by men only. As
I am writing, my Burmese orderly is sitting in the
garden sewing his jacket. He is usually sewing
when not sent on messages. He seems to sew very
well.

Weaving is usually done by women. Under

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581 divorce your husband or your wife without good—
586 very good and sufficient cause. And what is good
and sufficient cause is very well understood. That
a woman should have a nagging tongue, that a man
should be a drunkard, what could be better cause
than this? The gravity of the offence lies in whether
it makes life unbearable together, not in the name
you may give it.

The facility for divorce has other effects too. It
makes a man and a woman very careful in their
behaviour to each other. The chain that binds them
is a chain of mutual forbearance, of mutual endur-
ance, of mutual love; and if these be broken, then
is the bond gone. Marriage is no fetter about a
man or woman, binding both to that which they may
get to hate.

[175] In the first Burmese war in 1825 there was a
[227] man, an Englishman, taken prisoner in Ava and put
in prison, and there he found certain Europeans and
Americans. And after a time, for fear of attempts
at escape, these prisoners were chained together two
and two. And he tells you, this Englishman, how
terrible this was, and of the hate and repulsion that
arose in your heart to your co-bondsman. Before
they were chained together they lived in close neigh-
bourhood, in peace and amity; but when the chains
came it was far otherwise, though they were no nearer
than before. They got to hate each other.

And this is the Burmese idea of marriage, that
it is a partnership of love and affection, and that
when these die, all should be over. An unbreakable
marriage appears to them as a fetter, a bond, some-
thing hateful and hate inspiring. You see, they are

General Attitudes of the Burmese toward Work.

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Rank and status in the Burmese Village is determined to a large extent on the basis of occupation - with the factor of wealth where applicable taking precedence over occupation. The highest rank is accorded to the Buddhist monks who exert the ultimate influence. Government officials including the township officers, the THU CH (headman) and alders, and the schoolmaster occupy the second rank. The large land owners (of this group the rice-mill owners rate highest) rank next. Below these are the tradesman - the paddy dealers, shop keepers and small holdings farmers who comprise the bulk of the population. Professional artisans such as carpenters, blacksmiths, gold and silver smiths occupy a lower position. However, it is common for the small holdings farmers to practice a secondary occupation such as pottery making.

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Fishermen and hunters are looked down on by the rest of the community because they offend Buddhist precepts by taking life. In this class also are those who raise animals (cows, poultry, pigs) for food, smugglers and brewers. Fishermen, particularly those such as U Myaing who operate in fisheries often become wealthy, but the stigma of the source of this wealth is remembered by the community. A story is told of a rich fisherman who came to cover the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon with gold plate. Unfortunately, he had sinned so much by taking the lives of fish that he could not see the pagoda. In a rage he returned to his IN to cover its posts with the gold. Because of the stigma attached to fishing those who make their living in this way tend to live together in their own communities. Time Pathee, U Myaing's village is primarily a fishermen's community.

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In the days of the Burmese kings, wealthy men and nobles (THAKIN) would assign people under their command to serve as pagoda slaves. Their names were engraved in stone and their descendants for all eternity assigned to this position. The duties were light - consisting mainly of sweeping the platforms and carrying for the images, but the social position was next to the lowest. It is believed that the flower vendors on the platform of the Rangoon

pagodas and those throughout the country are descendants of the pagoda slaves.

Beggars are rated below the pagoda slaves - but, because of the Buddhist merit associated with giving do well for themselves.

The beggars live in communities on the outskirts of the town often in cemeteries. They are thought to exorcise the dead to get the coins placed in the mouth of the deceased to ensure expenses on his journey to heaven. The wood of the coffin is believed to be used in constructing their huts. Professional undertakers or morticians are regarded with horror since they like the beggars, make their living from the dead. The functions of burial are performed gratis by the entire village. A story is currently going round the University dormitories telling of an immensely wealthy Burmese coffin maker in Rangoon who has offered riches to the young man who will marry his beautiful daughter. When the future seems blank the students' friend advises "Hey, why don't you go and marry the coffin maker's daughter?" It seems that the money would scarcely compensate for the social discrimination. The extent to which the occupation classes are rigid in marriage and other social exchanges is an interesting problem.

A young man is obliged to remain within the occupation class of his family or to rise to greater heights. He is advised at an early age to "be simple, aim high, and tell the truth." When children play at drafts (thieves) of other "low class" games their parents object to their low aspirations and advise them to play nobles and ministers. One would feel justified in remaining idle rather than accept a position below that of his birth. It is better to accept a clerks job at a low salary than an artisans at a high salary. On the other hand those born into lower status occupation groups tend to be satisfied with their state as a condition of birth. In Rangoon, however, even the hawkers may have ambitions to achieve fame and fortune. The opportunities for social mobility is greater in the towns and cities but definitely restricted in the villages.

Apprenticeship to trades begins at the age of 12 to 14 years, and usually lasts for several years. Ordinarily the youth is attached to the shop of a relative where he lives and is paid a subsistence wage while learning. The key to high positions lies in education in

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INTRODUCTION

1. THE RISE OF A VERNACULAR LITERATURE IN BURMA

BURMA is a small country lying between the two great countries of India and China, and at a first glance it may perhaps be thought that Burmese civilization has little of originality or individuality, and that it is only a minor branch of the Indian and Chinese civilizations. That is not the case. The peninsula of Indo-China shades into India and China along its borders, but Burma proper, where Burmese is spoken,¹ lies away from these borders, and therefore preserves special characteristics of her own. Surrounded on three sides by highlands and on the fourth by the sea, Burma has always remained insular, more insular even than England. The barriers, however, were not impassable, and there were routes from India and China along which foreign influences came, but in such a restricted way that Burma could absorb them without losing her individuality. Even now, when with better sea communications foreign influences come in more extensively, the power of absorption possessed by Burma and the Burmese still leave them their individuality, and they are still a nation with a civilization of their own.

According to early chronicles which most English scholars, except Mr G. E. Harvey, have accepted as quite reliable, the kingdom of Prome in Lower Burma was flourishing as a civilized State by about the fifth century before Christ. A few centuries earlier the first kingdom, named Tagaung, in Upper Burma, is said to have been founded by a king who came overland from India. He found the natives quite civilized and willing to be more so. That kingdom was destroyed, but was revived and restored by another king from India during the lifetime of the Buddha. It, too, was destroyed and the kingdom of Prome was later founded by a prince of Tagaung. Prome is generally believed to have dominated the regions around

¹ Burma proper is the valley of the Irrawaddy. On the west of it are the Chins and allied tribes, on the north Kachins, and on the east the Shans. They were under the Burmese kings and are now under the Government of Burma. Being backward races, except the Shans, they have no writing.

175 it, carrying on trade with India and the rest of Indo-China. During
 177 this period Burmese dancing and music and poetry, as embodied in
 175 songs, perhaps assumed definite and national forms. But there was
 212 no writing. The kings that came from India probably knew writing,
 but their knowledge was perhaps limited; in any case, it never
 reached the people. The introduction of Buddhism into the country
 brought no writing, as it came through traders whose knowledge
 of religious learning was meagre. The few religious tracts preserved in
 monasteries were looked upon merely as curious and sacred objects.
 The religion, feeble from the beginning, decayed and soon dis-
 appeared. The kingdom came to an end in the first century A.D.¹

175 A new kingdom was founded in Upper Burma at Pagan, which
 779 controlled the land and river trade-routes, and as a result of its
 212 commercial advantages, it became a powerful kingdom with the
 ascension to the throne of Anawrahta in 1044. From that point
 Burmese history ceases to be conjectural. Through the influence of
 the learned and saintly monk, Shin Araham, Buddhism in one of its
 purest forms was introduced into the kingdom by Anawrahta. With
 it, writing was also introduced. The alphabet was the 'Square Pali',
 and the literature the *Three Pitakas* embodying all the religious
 101 teachings in Pali. Curiously enough, the alphabet and the literature
 174 did not come directly from India, but from Burma itself—from the
 174 Talaing kingdom of Thaton. The Talaings were a branch of the
 Burmese race. Many think that they were a mixture of native tribes
 with Indian traders. I venture to disagree. The earliest inhabitants of
 Burma were Indonesians, who settled on the coast of Burma during
 successive 'drifts' of humanity from the west, through India, to further
 east. Later, there was an infiltration of Mongolian tribes, who came
 down the rivers from the North. Inland, where the Indonesian element
 was weak, the new-comers dominated and later became the Burmese;
 along the coast where the Indonesian element was strong the tribes
 united and became the Talaings. However, all this is mere con-
 175 jecture. The early history of the Talaing kingdom of Thaton, which
 101 Anawrahta had to destroy to obtain possession of the alphabet and
 the *Three Pitakas*, is not known, except that it was perhaps in
 existence a few centuries before Christ and was under the influence

[14] ¹ Pe Maung Tin and G. H. Luce, *The Glass Palace Chronicle*; A. Phayre, *History of Burma*. G. E. Harvey in his *History of Burma* contends that the first Burmese kingdom was Prome, and that it flourished only in about the seventh century A.D.

INTRODUCTION

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of Hindu traders from South India. After the introduction of Buddhism into South India by Asoka in 261 B.C., the traders began to bring Buddhist elements to Thaton. With the establishment in the third or fourth century after Christ of the Hindu kingdoms in Java and Sumatra, Thaton became an important trading centre, and with the rise of a great Buddhist centre at Conjeeveram in Madras in the fifth century, the Talaings began to receive religious writings in Pali. From that time onwards, learning was definitely established in the kingdom, and, as a result, a Talaing literature came into being. Anawrahta was interested in Pali only, and therefore when he destroyed the city, he burnt all the manuscripts except those in Pali.¹

The writing and learning that were thus introduced into Pagan took root at once. Prose and poetry as embodied in the language of the court and in songs had been in existence long before, though unwritten, and now the new learning turned them into written forms and began to develop them. Pali was studied everywhere, and in the newly-built temples with their crowded monastic life, works in Pali on religion, on Pali grammar and prosody, and on the legal code of Manu came to be produced.² Translations were also made, and soon Pagan became famous throughout India for its Pali scholarship. But

¹ The Burmese language belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese group, whereas the Talaing belongs to the Mon-Khmer group. In spite of Anawrahta's conquest and in spite of the fact that racially they were cousins, the Talaings became completely merged with the Burmese only in the eighteenth century. The probability of the Sanskrit drama reaching the Talaings is considered in chap. ii.

² G. E. Harvey, *op. cit.*, pp. 59, 70.

The most famous for literary activity was the *Kyanhsu Ohmin* temple. Though built perhaps even before Anawrahta, when a corrupted form of Buddhism was prevalent, it is still in an excellent condition (Harvey, p. 17).

The code of Manu was compiled originally in Sanskrit, during the period 200 B.C.-A.D. 200. Since that time it has been one of the chief sources of Hindu law (J. D. Mayne, *Hindu Law*). The Burmese received it in a Talaing-Pali version in which the sacerdotal element had been done away with. That explains why, although Manu is one of the chief sources also of Burmese Buddhist law, it has little in common with Hindu law. The existence of the code as the chief source of Talaing law (Harvey, *op. cit.*, p. 111) raises again the question, how far were the Talaing writings under the influence of Sanskrit and its literature? We shall never know. When Anawrahta destroyed Talaing institutions and historical and literary works, he intended that all knowledge of the past greatness of the Talaings should pass into oblivion so as to smooth his way towards unifying Burma into one single State.

Pali has been, since 1044, the classical language of Burma.

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175 there never was any attempt to imitate the Pali language and its
538 literature in the vernacular, and Burma offers no parallel to the
198 controversy among English Renaissance scholars over the merits and
demerits of the vernacular.

175 The period of Pagan's ascendancy marked the zenith of Burmese
538 greatness and civilization. It was a great centre of trade, and visitors
from afar talked of the glory that was Pagan. Its supremacy was
unquestioned by the whole of Burma, which had been united into a
kingdom for the first time. It even demanded and probably obtained
nominal allegiance from the greater part of Indo-China and the
governors of the outlying provinces of the Chinese Empire. But the
period of Pagan's ascendancy was not a great period in Burmese
literature. Her capital looked radiant with its golden temples, her
kings were learned and powerful, her troops marched in triumph, but
Pagan never forgot that no material thing was real, and everything
decayed and perished. Therefore, the scholars were interested only in
religious themes, and religious themes seldom offer adequate scope for
the development of a great literature. Although the clearness of diction
and the artistry of the death-song of the royal tutor, Anantathuria,
composed while awaiting execution in 1173, indicate that at least
a few must have practised the use of the vernacular for non-
religious purposes, the efforts of writers in the vernacular were
chiefly directed towards the recording of inscriptions, which are still
[172] preserved in countless numbers in the pagodas of Pagan.¹ Many of
these inscriptions contain good prose. The earlier inscriptions
tend to be bombastic through sheer wealth of learning; the scholars
of Pagan could not at once learn to control their use of the newly-
acquired scholarship, just as the earlier writers of the Renaissance in
England failed to restrict their use of learned words. However, after
a few decades, the bombastic style gave place to a simpler and more
concise diction. In addition to the narrowness of scope offered by
religious themes, there was another reason which prevented Pagan,

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¹ The death-song is one of the greatest poems in the language and is the
oldest non-religious piece of literature existing in Burma. A translation is
given in G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 55, and another in Tin and Luce, *The Glass
Palace Chronicle*, p. 139.

G. E. Harvey, op. cit. (p. 70) describes the inscriptions as 'richly human and
intensely devout', and he ranks (p. 38) some of Kyansittha's (1084-1112)
inscriptions as literature.

[172] *Epigraphia Birmanica*, a Government publication, gives the text of the
more important inscriptions with translations.

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in spite of its greatness in other directions, from being a great period of Burmese literature. The love of beauty, which is the basis of all literature, had adequate satisfaction in the developed art of architecture. The poets of Pagan wrote their poems in bricks, instead of words, and their pagodas are still famous. When one stands on the shore of the Irrawaddy and looks towards the ruins of Pagan, one is reminded of the delicate beauty of an incomplete poem.¹

Pagan fell in 1287 as the result of the Tartar onslaught during the time of Kubla Khan, the Scourge of God, and the country broke up into several little States, each attempting to control the others. For the next fifty years, political struggles went on in the capitals, but they failed to disturb the peace of smaller towns and villages. Many who had grown tired of the strife around the thrones flocked to the quiet of the village monasteries in order to find peace. Religion went on undiminished, but the learning connected with it decayed, for the royal patronage was lacking. Architecture also decayed because there was no royal support and because the country had become poor. Men turned to literature for its own sake, and during this period Burmese prose and poetry assumed definite forms with fully developed diction, rhythm, rhyme and style.²

¹ Many temples and pagodas of the Pagan period are in an excellent state of preservation and are still in use as places of worship. Scoft O'Conner's *Mandalay and Other Cities* contains fine illustrations of the more famous of these religious buildings.

The achievement of the Pagan kings, the 'Temple Builders', is summed up by Harvey thus: 'The legacy of their fleeting sway has enriched posterity for ever. It was they who made the sun-scorched wilderness, the solitary plain of Myingyan, to blossom forth into the architectural magnificence of Pagan. If they produced no nation-builder like Simon de Montfort, no lawgiver like Edward I, they unified Burma for more than two centuries, and that in itself was an achievement. But their role was æsthetic and religious rather than political. To them the world owes in great measure the preservation of Theravada Buddhism, one of the purest faiths mankind has ever known. Brahminism had strangled it in the land of its birth; in Ceylon its existence was threatened again and again; east of Burma it was not yet free from priestly corruptions; but the kings of Burma never wavered, and at Pagan the stricken faith found a city of refuge. Vainglorious tyrants built themselves lasting sepulchres, but none of these men has a tomb. . . . These men's magnificence went to glorify their religion, not to deck the tent wherein they camped during this transitory life.'—*History of Burma*, p. 70.

² *Ibid.*, p. 103. Since that time, prose and poetry show continuous development. The full history of Burmese literature still remains unwritten. However, the *Anthology of Burmese Literature*, a Government publication,

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536* Though prose and poetry had thus assumed definite forms by about the fourteenth, or early fifteenth century, the drama was unknown until very much later. The first real Burmese drama appeared, though it had its origins some decades earlier, only towards the close of the eighteenth century, and during the next hundred years it developed and then decayed. Burmese dramatic literature developed in a historical sequence and in a way essentially similar to that of the Elizabethan drama. But why the similarity? Is it accident? Is it because of the similarity in the geographical isolation of the two countries? Or, is there a definite way in which all dramas have to develop in natural sequence?

2. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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536* The history of Burmese drama can be divided into six stages. First, there is the age of the *Nibbathkin*, comparable to the English miracle play, ending about 1752. Second, we have, from 1752 to 1819, the period of the interlude¹ (comparable to the English morality and interlude) and the court drama. Third, we have the period of the dramatist, U Kyin U, 1819 to 1853. Fourth, we have the period of the poet, U Pon Nya, 1853 to 1878. Fifth, there is the period of decadence, 1878 to 1886. Sixth, we have the time from 1886 to the present day. As dates are in many cases uncertain in determining the periods I am taking the reigns of various kings. As the drama depended much on the court and the victories and defeats of the king, perhaps I am justified in so doing. In any case, if a date is wrong, it is wrong by not more than two or three years.

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536* The time before 1752 is the most difficult period as far as research is concerned. The centuries that followed the fall of Pagan—the time of internal wars, 1287 to 1531—saw the rise of a vernacular literature, which is found existing in the Empire of 1531 to 1752.²

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[78] arranges its extracts in more or less chronological order, and therefore gives a good idea of the development. The subject is outside the scope of this work but I mention it to show how late the first appearance of Burmese drama was as compared with other branches of Burmese literature.

¹ The term 'interlude' is explained in chap. i.

² Perhaps it will not be out of place to give a short summary of the history. The various small States into which the country broke up after 1287 gave place, after some fifty years of incessant strife, to Ava, the kingdom of the Burmese, and Pegu, that of the Taluings. The small principality of Toungoo under Ava rebelled and conquered the whole of Burma in 1531.

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The rise of the *Nibhatkhin* was the result of the rise of the vernacular literature, for then learning had reached the people. But we do not quite know at what time the *Nibhatkhin* first came into being. According to tradition, the custom of holding religious processions and pageants had existed long before 1752, about which time the interlude and the *Hawsa* (a recitation of a story in verse) came into being, but how long before nobody can tell. However, as it must have taken some time for the vernacular literature to take root, I adopt tentatively 1531 to 1752 as the period of the *Nibhatkhin*.

For the story of the development of the *Nibhatkhin*, I am dependent on tradition alone. The tradition of its development from the pageant is quite logical. Moreover, it is general and not confined to a particular district. I have discussed it with various Burmese scholars and I have made inquiries in far-away villages, and always I find the same tradition. In some out-of-the-way villages, which the influences that affected the drama at the capital had failed to reach, the development of the *Nibhatkhin* from the pageant was within living memory. Until recently, in such villages, one could even see the *Nibhatkhin* in its various stages of development. One village would be presenting a procession, another a pageant, a third would be staging a fully developed *Nibhatkhin*; in all the villages, their particular practice had been the custom for many years, further development having been checked by the introduction of the drama in its more mature stages by touring troupes of professional actors, and it had continued to exist side by side with the performances of strolling players, just as some miracle plays continued to be presented in certain places in England during the heyday of the Elizabethan

Under Bayinnaung (1551-81) the whole of Indo-China, the outlying provinces of China, and Manipur owed allegiance to the Burmese king. After his death, the Empire decayed until the ruler of Pegu, who had become independent, defeated the Burmese, and turned Burma into a Talaing Empire in 1752. The Empire was short-lived, for in the same year Alaungpaya rebelled, founded the last Burmese dynasty, and 'Burmanised' the Talaings by force. He and his successors turned Burma into one united kingdom, which with the Shan States, Siam, Manipur, and Assam, formed the Burmese Empire. The period 1752-1819 was the Age of Triumph, a fuller account of which is given in chap. ii.

The Burmese lost Assam, Manipur, and the native provinces of Arakan and Tenasserim to the British in 1824. The rest of Lower Burma fell into British hands in 1852. On 1 January 1886 the whole country was proclaimed a province of the Indian Empire.

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173 drama. In 1916 I saw a *Nibhatkhin* at the obscure town of Pauk.
178 For this period, I am greatly indebted to the notes made by my
536* father. They are the results of inquiries and researches spread over
127 a period of forty or fifty years. I realize that to many European
scholars the section on the *Nibhatkhis* must appear conjectural in its
dependence on tradition. My plea is that at present there is nothing
else to depend on.¹

● 175 With regard to the interlude, I am on surer ground. Again I
536* depend much on tradition, but it is now tradition supported by
[791] evidence. Besides the general and common tradition, there is the
127 tradition of the spirit mediums and actors, and, as I shall explain, the
647 tradition of my own family.

[791] Professional tradition of the mediums and actors is more reliable
than common tradition because the two professions, especially the
former, are closed fraternities, and as written records were never in
use, they handed down the facts regarding the nature and history of
their callings by word of mouth. To them oral tradition was as
strong as written records. Moreover, their oral tradition can be
checked by the stage conventions which exist at the present day. The
various stage conventions are considered in Chapter VII.

The tradition in my family² begins from about the year 1800.
About that time, an officer³ in the victorious army of King Bodawpaya

[114] ¹ Even Harvey, who wrote his *History of Burma* at Exeter College,
Oxford, often accepts oral tradition supported by no other evidence as
substantially correct (*History of Burma*, pp. 33, 41, 211, 252, 267, 299). In two
instances, pp. 33 and 41, the tradition cited dates back to the eleventh century
A.D.

² My father is U Pein, District Magistrate, Burma Commission, now
retired. In Burma, historical researches and inquiries are often made by
administrative officials, as their duties carry them all over the country and to
the remotest villages. Messrs Harvey, Stewart, Furnivall—great names in the
Burma Research Society—are all officials belonging to the Burma Commission.

³ He was Maha Minhla Mindin Raza.

I have to cite in this section the full names and official positions of some
members of my family because:

[551] 1. As the Burmese use no surnames, my name alone would not convey
anything regarding their identity.

2. The service record of the family may perhaps be construed as evidence
in favour of the reliability of its tradition. G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 310 where
he rejects Fuhrer's statement regarding an inscription because the 'precious
slab has never been produced, and in view of Fuhrer's service record its pro-
duction is essential.'

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was appointed viceroy of the Seven Hill Districts of Mindon, situated between Arakan and the river Irrawaddy. It was during the Age of Triumph, the period when the native interlude and the Siamese-influenced court drama were being fused. At the miniature court of the viceroy were presented interludes and court plays, and *Haukas* were publicly recited. In his palace,¹ a special apartment was built for the regular performance of plays and interludes, a special troupe of actors was taken under his patronage, and more famous troupes were often invited from the capital. In 1824 the unfortunate viceroy failed to stem the advance of the British forces, and he was executed and his palace burnt by royal order. From 1825 to 1852, the date of the second Anglo-Burmese war, Mindon was administered directly from the capital, and times were difficult; therefore dramatic performances at Mindon were few and far between. Though the son of the late viceroy was living, he wisely chose to leave the court, the administration of justice and politics alone, and as a result, he had neither the influence nor the wealth to patronize the drama. Therefore, as far as the drama was concerned, a gap resulted in the tradition of the family. In 1852 the British annexed the whole of Lower Burma, and Mindon passed into British hands. The viceroy's grandson was appointed chief administrative officer. This officer, my great-grandfather, took his office to be exactly similar in rank to that of his grand-sire, and though the British Government did not know of it—or the authorities at Rangoon did not care—he restored in effect the court of his grandfather, and dramatic performances were revived.² To him I am indebted for preserving much of the custom and tradition of the executed ancestor. To his revival of official performances of plays and interludes, I owe my information gathered from members of my family and the townspeople of Mindon. While the court poet, U Pon Nya, was further developing the drama, continuing the work of U Kyin U at the Burmese capital of Mandalay, in the out-of-the-way town of Mindon the interludes were still being performed. But it must not be supposed that Mindon was the only place where the interlude lived on. It survived in many places alongside the plays of the two great dramatists. But only from Mindon have I been able to obtain first-hand information and

¹ Though it was termed the 'palace', it was by no means a stately mansion or an imposing castle. Except for its gilded spires, emblems of the king's authority, it was just a big house of timber and bamboo with thatched roofs.

² He was U Saik, Extra Assistant Commissioner.

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647 accounts regarding it. Apart from the notes gathered by my father, I
 175 base my information on the accounts given to me orally by my grand-
 536* mother and grand-aunts who actually saw the interludes performed.

127 In support of the oral tradition regarding the nature of the
 175 interlude, there are some echoes of it in the plays of U Kyin U. He
 536* developed the interlude into a proper play, but the change was not
 a sudden one, and in his plays we find echoes of the interlude in its
 various stages. His plays are considered in detail in another chapter.
 There are also contemporary references to the interlude. Even from
 an English pen we have an account. Colonel Yule in 1855 saw an
 entertainment midway between the interlude and the developed plays
 of U Kyin U.¹

644 The period of the court plays offers an easier task for research.
 536* The *Rama* play from Siam is preserved, with adaptations, it is true,
 [177] but with notes on the original when a change was made in the pre-
 538 served version.² The other Siamese play of *Eenaung* has come down
 to us. The poem *Rama-yagan* which Burmanized the *Rama* story
 has also come down. Accounts of the performances of the court plays
 and the recitation of the poem at court are many and well known.
 From the time when they were first composed down to the present
 day, the works of these court poets and dramatists have been studied
 and read. The influence of these works on the interlude is suggested,
 not only by the 'internal evidence' in U Kyin U's plays, but also
 by the editorial prefaces to the works in their various editions.

[114] Though only three plays of U Kyin U exist at the present day as
 far as is known, the period is quite easy of research, because references
 and notes regarding him occur in various records of the court and the
 nobility, and because the Burma Research Society has published new
 editions of two of his plays; and though the prefaces to them are short
 and no attempt is made to make a complete study, suggestions for
 further study and research are made by the editors.

175 The period of U Pon Nya offers the easiest task, as compared with
 536* other periods, so far as research is concerned. All his plays are

¹ H. Yule, *A Narrative of the Mission sent by the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava in 1855*. His description of the dramatic entertainment he saw is considered again in the next chapter in connexion with Sir William Ridgway's theory of the development of the Burmese drama.

² There is a copy of the *Rama* play in the British Museum. It is wrongly catalogued as by U Ku, who was only the editor. All these plays and the poem have been printed again and again, and are easily obtainable in Burma.

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preserved in their entirety except the *Waythandaya*, and even that is extant with only two scenes missing, while respecting the lost scenes themselves some accounts are preserved. His works have been also studied widely and editorial prefaces to his works offer adequate accounts of his life and writings. Moreover, many courtiers of U Pon Nya's time are still living, and from them first-hand accounts have been obtained by scholars of the present day. After all, U Pon Nya's period is very recent.¹

For the decadent period, 1878 to 1886, I was dependent on oral accounts of the plays until I went to England. Printing came into general use in Burma during this period and very great numbers of plays were printed. From the Government register of published books we learn that as many as three or four editions of 5,000 copies each of the more famous plays of the period were sold out a few weeks after publication. Yet search as I might, I could not find any copies of the plays in Burma. I discovered later that every one of the more famous plays, with about a hundred less-known plays of the period, are happily preserved in the British Museum. Incidentally, I found that the oral accounts regarding them were correct.

References to historical events and to non-dramatic works made in the thesis are taken from standard works.

As regards my dependence on oral tradition, there is this to be said. The oral accounts of a less civilized nation may be more imaginative than accurate, but with the Burmese everything points to the reliability of the tradition. After all, it goes back to only about two hundred years, and the intervening period is not so long as to undermine human memory. Moreover, as I have said, the truth of the tradition can be ascertained from other sources. It should be remembered that in a country where printing was not in general use until about 1860, and records and literary works were written on palm-leaf and parchment, both of which are very liable to destruction by

¹ My chief informants for the period are:

1. Myothawundauk-kadaw, wife of the Myothawundauk, who distinguished himself in the defence of the palace during the Myingun Rebellion mentioned in the chapter on U Pon Nya. She was a lady-in-waiting at court during the last two reigns.

2. My mother's elder brother. My maternal grandfather was Naymyo Thiri Kyawhtin Nawyahta, Minister for Revenue at Minhla, and an 'honorary poet to the court' in the last two reigns.

CHAPTER I

THE ORIGINS OF BURMESE DRAMA

1. BURMESE MUSIC AND DANCING

I HAVE said that no Burmese drama is to be found before the eighteenth century. The origins of that drama are to be found in the remote past of Burma's own national development, rather than in foreign importations or influence.

No doubt, Burmese music and dancing arose out of primitive religious rituals as in other countries. Society developed, civilization expanded, and contact with the Hindus and Chinese gave new ideas, but the native element always dominated, and the music and dancing remained, as indeed they still remain, essentially Burmese. In A.D. 800 when the Hindu expansion overseas was an accomplished fact, when the Hindu and Chinese civilizations had come into contact with each other, and when the rest of Indo-China had been drawn into the influence of those civilizations, Burmese music and dancing remained independent. In 800-2, when some parts of Upper Burma were under the nominal suzerainty of Nanchao (then a semi-independent State, now Yunnan), two Burmese deputations accompanied Nanchao missions to the Court of the Chinese Emperor, and the Burmese 'sang songs containing Sanskrit words and went through spelling dances, lining up in a pattern which read "Nanchao sends holy music!"¹ The Imperial Secretary has left us a poem describing the occasion. The following is an extract:

Music from the land of P'iao, music from the land of P'iao,²
Brought hither from the great ocean's south-west corner
Yung Ch'iang's son, Shunant'o.
Has come with an offering of southern tunes to fête the New Year.
Our Emperor has taken his seat in the courtyard of the palace.
He does not press his cap strings to his ears, he is listening to you!

¹ G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma*, p. 14.

² The land of P'iao was the name by which Burma was known to the Chinese until the tenth century (*ibid.*, p. 11).

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At the first blast of the jewelled shell, their matted locks grow crisp.

At one blow from their copper gong their painted limbs leap.
Pearl streams glitter as they twist, as though the stars were shaken in the sky

Flowery crowns nod and whirl, with the motion of dragon or snake.¹

The music and the dance were strange enough and pleasing enough for the Emperor to bestow minor honorary offices at the court on the leaders of the deputation. Burmese music and dancing continued to develop, and at least the music reached great artistic heights in the kingdom of Pagan, for the kings were its patrons; Alaungsithu, king from 1112 to 1167, was himself an accomplished musician, and introduced new notes and tunes. With all its developments, the music remained so national that when the great Anawrahta (1044-77) led a raiding expedition into Bengal and wanted to leave a sign that he had been there, he set up, not stone pillars as was the practice of most eastern kings of the period, but stone images of Burmese musicians. And when Alaungsithu, his grandson, later raided Bengal, he found them; and men say that the stone musicians played tunes as if they were alive, to the great delight of the homesick king.²

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Music and dancing could develop on their own without being overwhelmed by an already developed drama, as the Burmese did not know of the great Indian epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, or the Sanskrit drama and its kinsman the puppet show, although Java and the rest of Indo-China, through their Hindu colonists and kings, had definitely adopted the Indian epics and the drama as their own by about the sixth or seventh century. This absence of Hindu influence on Burmese music and dancing explains why the Burmese are the only civilized nation in the Far East who do not possess the fighting dance—the dance essentially connected with the great Indian epics.³

¹ The extract is taken from G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 14.

² Harvey, pp. 30 and 48; Tin and Luce, *The Glass Palace Chronicle*, p. 114. Alaungsithu was a great warrior and traveller.

³ A fuller account of the Sanskrit drama and the epics is given in chap. ii.

18 So the worship of the ^{BURMESE DRAMA} ~~gods~~ ^{spirits} lived on, and with the advance
civilization the spirit dances became elaborate, for though the belief
was primitive, the people were no longer so. The dances benefited
from the developments that had taken place in Burmese music which,
as we have seen, flourished under the patronage of the Pagan kings.
New spirits were added, and they were usually those of heroic princes.
The dancers were now many, for the mediums turned themselves into
dancing and music mistresses. The chief medium of each spirit
dressed herself in the special dress of the spirit, but the junior
mediums, who were equivalent to the chorus of an English revue,
were in the dress of Burmese princesses. It is interesting to note the
[292] origin of this dress. The mediums realized the necessity of dressing
[565] themselves in fine raiment, but as everybody wore clothes of bright
colours, the only solution of the problem was to don the dress of the
court and official class, which the commoners were forbidden to
wear by law, except during feasts and dances. When drama proper
[536] came into being, the hero and the heroine dressed themselves in the
court dress, even when they were representing common characters.

3. MIRACLES AND INTERLUDES

175 After the fall of the kingdom of Pagan in A.D. 1257, Burma was
369 the scene of fierce civil wars, but the trouble was mainly in the
726 capitals; in the villages and small towns life went on in its joyous
779 way. Religion continued to spread in spite of the fact that the throne
538 of Pagan was no longer in existence to support it. Learning began
to reach the remotest parts of the country, carried far and near
by monks. To escape from the aimless strife of the civil wars, men
turned towards literature. Money was lacking to compose poems in
brick as had been done at Pagan, and men now expressed their love
for the religion and their love for the beautiful in writing. The new
literature further educated the people and made even stronger the
already strong religious fervour. As a result, at village feasts and on
days of public rejoicing, the people turned towards their religion for
amusement and entertainment. So pageants depicting scenes from
the life of the Buddha and from his Birth Stories came into being.

796 Pageants were given on ordinary carts that were in use for all
541 kinds of transport and which are still in use in backward parts of the
493 country at the present day. Each cart carried a group of (amateur)
actors standing still and representing a set scene. Originally, no
doubt, there were only a few carts representing scenes from different
stories. Later, a pageant came to consist of many carts and many

THE ORIGINS OF BURMESE DRAMA

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However, the Burmese equivalent of the English interlude came into being all the same. It developed out of the equivalent of the English miracle play, but indirectly. The chance of developing the drama was seized by professional actors. To break away from the tradition and the conservatism, persons outside the pale of 'good' society were needed. Spirit dancers were such persons. They worshipped the *nats*¹ and most people looked upon them with fear as being in touch with sinister and unnatural forces. They were outside the religion, and their drunken dances—drunken from wine and ecstasy—were outside the popular conception of moral behaviour. Therefore the new professional actors were drawn from the ranks of the spirit mediums. However, those who took to the new profession were malcontents and failures in their original profession. The increase in the number of the spirit dancers had caused the mediums to form themselves into a fraternity, the entry to which was closely guarded. The economic attractions of spirit dancing tempted people who had no faith in the spirits to become mediums. These factors caused discontent and disunion among the mediums, and within and without the fraternity pseudo-mediums came into being. The advance of education had robbed the *nats* of many worshippers, but most people continued to patronize spirit dancing for mere love of music and dancing. The result was the rise of a class of professional entertainers who danced and sang and played on musical instruments. The new dancers pretended to be mediums and semi-mediums, but their dancing was unconnected with any spirit feast. The rise of this professional dancing was doubtless gradual and must have preceded the *Nibhatkhin*. As early as about the year 1400, two princes and their attendants, when turned out of their palace, earned their living as wandering minstrels and professional dancers, pretending to be spirit worshippers.² Because of the very fact that the new dancers were malcontents and failures in their original

¹ The objects of the spirit worship are the thirty-seven *nats*, all of whom are more or less of evil character; but there are in addition to these many good *nats* who have little to do with human affairs. [176]

² One prince became King Minkaung (1401-22), the other, his brother, helping him to gain the throne. An attendant became King Mohnyinthadot (1427-40), and the others ministers (G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 96). [175] ●

The new dancers were mostly men. Men mediums were secondary to women mediums, and perhaps that was one of the reasons for the discontent among the mediums, and also the reason why the men took to wandering all over the country as dancers. [142]

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536* While the interlude was developing, the drama, another form of
178 entertainment, was also becoming rapidly popular. The *Hawsa* or the
773 dramatic reading and recital of a Birth Story in verse was becoming
538 the fashion. The *Hawsa* was in dialogue form, and the reciter changed
his voice and used dramatic gestures. As I have said, one cannot be
certain of many things regarding the interlude, but it seems exceedingly
probable that the early interludes were not literary. The actors
were unlettered, unpractised in verse composition and only knew the
Jataka Birth Stories from translations. The *Hawsa*, on the other
hand, was a literary work. It was in verse. The reciter was an
accomplished verse-writer if not a poet, and when reciting pieces he
himself had not written, he invariably put in additions and modifica-
tions. He knew Pali and therefore could read the *Jakas* in the
original. Whilst the actor was looked upon as nothing more than
a beggar, the reciter was greatly respected. This will perhaps explain
why the *Hawsa*, and not the interlude, has come down to us in
writing.¹ With all the differences, however, the reciter and the actor
were akin to each other, and both contributed much to the rise of
the developed play, just as both the dramatic recitations of the epic
Ramayana, and the open-air performances of its scenes contributed
much to the rise of the developed Sanskrit play in India.

536* There is no special term for that entertainment which I have called
the interlude. The name *Pya-sat*, which means a play, is vaguely
applied to it in common with developed plays, but it is certain that
the term came into use only about the time of U Kyin U to denote
developed plays. Therefore, I have ventured to name it the interlude,
partly because of its similarity to the English interlude, but mainly
because it was given in the middle of, or at least subsidiary to, the
main entertainment of dancing.

[175] The interlude and the *Hawsa* were at the height of their popularity
in 1767 when Siam was conquered. The results of the conquest are
considered in Chapter II.

4. SIR WILLIAM RIDGEWAY'S THEORY OF THE ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF BURMESE DRAMA

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114 Sir William Ridgeway, in *The Dramas and Dramatic Dances of
Non-European Races*, considers that the dramas and dramatic dances of
those races support his theory regarding Greek tragedy, that it arose

¹ Some specimens of the *Hawsa* are given in the *Anthology of Burmese
Literature*.

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BURMESE DRAMA

538 On this great national epic ⁷ were founded many plays. For
 536* example, the thirteen Trivandrum plays commonly attributed to the
 authorship of Bhasa contain two based on the *Ramayana*. The date
 of the plays is generally accepted as the second or third century after
 Christ.

2. THE SIAMESE COURT PLAY OF RAMA

177 From about the third century after Christ, the great Hindu expansion
 175 overseas began in earnest, and as a result many Hindu kingdoms
 101 were founded in Indo-China, Malaya, Java, and the surrounding
 regions. Before that time, very probably there was at least some
 intercourse between India and those regions, and may be Buddhism
 was not unknown in the regions mentioned. But by the third century
 A.D. Buddhism had completely disappeared in them, except for very
 faint traces remaining in Burma. In India itself, Buddhism was on
 the wane and Brahmanism was in the ascendant. Therefore when the
 merchants of Northern India spread a new culture in Indo-China and
 [538] the surrounding regions, the culture was distinctly Hindu. The
 Indians took with them their religious epics, the *Ramayana* and the
Mahabharata. Though both came to be very well known, the former
 was perhaps the more popular, probably because it was more finished
 artistically. Sanskrit plays were also no doubt introduced. The
 Hindu influence reached its height about the fourth and fifth
 centuries—in the third century Bhasa was composing his plays, and
 Kalidasa, the greatest of Hindu-Sanskrit dramatists lived about the
 year 400. Hindu poems and romances must also have been brought
 into the newly-founded kingdoms and trading centres.

177 The intensity of the new influence varied in the regions. Burma
 101 was nearest and directly on the route from India. But probably
 174 there was already a strong native civilization, and Hindu culture failed
 to take root. Along the coast, however, at Thaton, there was quite a
 strong outpost of Hindu culture, but even there the Hindu influence
 was quite negligible compared with regions farther east. In Cambodia
 the new culture was especially favoured, and in Java, Sumatra and
 the Malay peninsula, it took deep root. In Siam, however, the
 intensity was much less. In the narrow circle of the court the Hindu
 influence was strong, but the people were quite untouched by it.
 The chief reason was very probably the continuous, peaceful invasion
 by people from the north, the Shans, or at least the forefathers
 of the modern Shans. According to some scholars, they were
 Buddhists, which is not unlikely as Buddhism, in a modified form,
 [i.e., the *Ramayana* -- ANALYST]

101 walked up and down the stage—a dramatic practice which was taken
536* from the Siamese and used on the Burmese stage. The language was
538 the language of the court, artificial, but not so removed from reality as
to prevent it from being understood by the lowest classes. The
play was mostly in verse. The prose was poetic and elegant except in
comic scenes.

● [175] When the Burmese conquered Siam in 1767, they were able to
take the play back with them for various reasons. The play was to
both nations a *Jataka* story. The manners and the language of the
Siamese court, as depicted in the play, were similar in many ways to
those of the Burmese court. The mythology was common to both
nations. The play was easy of reproduction at the Burmese court
because of the many characteristics common to both countries, and
because the captive and exiled members of the Siamese nobility at the
Burmese court were ready and willing to help not only because they
were anxious to teach the new art to their conquerors, but also because
they missed an entertainment to which they had been accustomed for
generations.

3. THE RAMA PLAY AT THE BURMESE COURT

175 The age that followed the conquest of Siam in 1767 was one of
669 triumph. In 1752 the Burmese Empire had been destroyed by the
727 Talaings, and the conquerors were ruthlessly putting into practice
their policy of stopping the continual war between Burmese and
Talaing by exterminating the Burmese as a race. In the same year,
however, a humble villager arose, rallied the Burmese around him,
with the result that five years later the mighty Talaing Empire was
destroyed and the Talaings as a race disappeared from Burma. The
obscure villager became the great Alaungpaya, founder of the famous
dynasty that bore his name. He tried to conquer Siam, but died
when victory was in sight. His son, Hsinbyushin, carried on the war,
and continued the extension of the Empire. Manipur was soon
conquered, and in 1767 Siam was completely crushed and its capital
destroyed. The Siamese court was taken captive to the Burmese
capital. The weary army was given no rest, however, for the Chinese
had invaded Burma. From 1765 to 1769, the Chinese carried on a
serious campaign against Burma. There were four distinct invasions,
but each was repulsed. In 1769, the Chinese defeat was complete.
Of that age of triumph, Harvey says:

The victory [against the Chinese], coming as it did on top of a

THE RISE OF A COURT DRAMA IN BURMA

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generation of continual warfare which might well have exhausted the race, shows that the exploits of Alaungpaya were no mere flash in the pan, but were broad-based on the energy of the race as a whole. . . . The chronicles for the period are verbose and pompous, but it is impossible to read them without being struck with their fierce pride.¹

It was during this age of triumph, after the Chinese invaders had been sent back defeated and people could breathe again without anxiety, that the Siamese *Rama* was produced at the Burmese court for the first time.

The court of Ava, then the capital of Burma, was in many ways comparable to the court of Elizabeth after the victory over Spain. Glory and wealth and splendour surrounded the king and his courtiers. Masters in the arts of war, they were also masters in the arts of peace. Almost everyone was learned, and the ablest soldiers and statesmen were also the foremost poets. Queens and ladies-in-waiting vied with princes and lords in the study and practice of learning and literature. Experts in the study of Pali, Sanskrit, and Buddhistic lore, keen students of foreign institutions and literatures, they were essentially Burmese, and enriched their own language and literature with borrowings from all sources. The period 1770 to 1824, the date of the first British conquest, that period of triumph, may easily be termed the age of translations, so keen were the people for knowledge from all sources. Siamese romances, Pali *Jatakas*, Chinese histories, Siamese and Cambodian chronicles, a history of Portugal, a Sanskrit work on sexual science—this list made at random shows clearly the range and variety of the translations. The court led the people in the pursuit of learning and literature. The courtiers were learned, the king was a patron of learning, and at the court the captives and hostages numbered among them great scholars and poets from conquered States. After the toils of war, men turned towards learning for rest and recreation. Men gloried in their country and studied their own literature, history, and institutions, and that study naturally led to the study of those of other countries. Almost everyone studied and almost everyone wrote. The age of triumph was an age of learning.²

The Siamese court plays appealed to the imagination of the court. The Siamese captives longed for their native entertainment.

¹ *History of Burma*, p. 258.

² Some account of the learned atmosphere of the court and of its more famous translators and poets is given by G. E. Harvey, op. cit., pp. 249 and 250.

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536* gesture passed on to the Burmese reproduction of the play. The rigid
201 tradition soon called forth protests, if not in actual words, then in
deeds. If the *Rama* play could not be changed to meet Burmese
tastes, other plays would have to be invented. As a result, a native
court drama came into being.¹

4. THE BURMESE COURT DRAMA

536* It was during the reign of Hsinbyushin under whom the victories
● 175 against the Siamese and the Chinese had been won, that the *Rama*
644 play was first presented at court. He was succeeded by Singu, who
538 was king from 1776 to 1782. Singu could appreciate and compose
good poetry when sober, but such occasions were rare. All the same,
the learned atmosphere of the court was maintained, for his queen,
the daughter of the famous commander-in-chief who defeated the
Siamese and the Chinese invaders, was an accomplished poet herself,
and she ever encouraged the continued presentation of the Siamese
Rama at court. Singu was followed by Bodawpaya (1782-1811),
who was one of the strongest despots that ever sat on the Burmese
throne. But his despotism was of the enlightened kind, and
under his patronage, the learned atmosphere of the court remained
unimpaired. The earlier half of his reign saw the rise of a Burmese
court drama.

Some time about the year 1783, a young courtier came to the
forefront of scholastic circles at the court. This young man, who
was a typical product of the age of learning, which was also the age of
triumph, had distinguished himself in various campaigns when he
began his literary career by composing songs modelled on those of
the Siamese *Rama*. He was essentially a scholar, learning and experi-
menting, and he was an accomplished student of literature, both
[195] Burmese and foreign. But in spite of his great learning, he kept his
own writings free from too rich an imagery and too bombastic a
language; his Burmese was simple and pure. He wrote in the language
of the court but without artificiality, so that his songs were not only
admired at court, but understood and sung by the common people.
After making his name as a song-writer, he produced various literary
works of all kinds and thus enhanced his reputation, until he reached
the zenith of his literary career in about the year 1785, when he com-
posed and produced the first Burmese court play. This young

¹ Extracts from the *Ramayana*, *The Statue Play* attributed to Bhaasa, and
the Siamese-Burmese *Rama* play are given in appendix i.

THE RISE OF A COURT DRAMA IN BURMA

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courtier later won fresh fame as a statesman and judge, becoming known to history as the Minister Myawaddi.¹

As has been stated, there was at the Siamese court a companion play to *Rama*. It was known as *Aindarwuntha*. There was also a Siamese court romance of the same name and dealing with the same theme. *Aindarwuntha* was a prince-soldier, and he had two sets of adventures, one amorous and the other martial. Myawaddi was one of those who broke away from the tradition that the Siamese models at the Burmese court must be preserved without any substantial change. He did not want to have his hands tied through this tradition, and so he did not translate the play, *Aindarwuntha*, but translated instead the court romance. Then he dramatized the romance, and called his new play, not *Aindarwuntha* but *Eenaung*.² In *Eenaung*, Myawaddi rejects the heroic adventures and tells only of the hero-prince's romantic intrigues.

The play is far too long. The *Rama* play was long, too, and it took two or three days to present it entire. The court had all the leisure in the world. *Rama*, if translated, would require about 400 of these pages. *Eenaung* is longer; it would be about 600 pages. The play was written more to be read than acted, and as far as is known, it was never presented entire. Only some scenes were acted. The play on the whole is disjointed; it is merely a collection of scenes, connected only through the personality of the prince. As the adventures are purely amorous, there is no action at all. We are told occasionally that the prince has gone on a journey or that he has achieved a conquest, but the scene is always the palace. Following the Siamese style, music and song are important elements in the play, but dances and fine dresses are absent. It is not a masque.

The merit of the play lies in its language, dialogue, and characterization. It is the language of the court, refined and elegant as that of *Rama*. But a certain element of simplicity is in it, and it is not too rich in words or in imagery, so that the common people could understand and appreciate it; in short, the usual clear style of the author, which is the hall-mark of his other writings, is also found in this play. In dialogue, the play retains the freshness and liveliness of the *Rama* play. In characterization, the play is a great advance on *Rama*

¹ An account of his career is given in G. E. Harvey, op. cit., p. 296.

² The play *Aindarwuntha* or *Eenaung* has been mentioned earlier in this chapter, on pp. 36 and 44-5.

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536* 74 These problems, which interest us now, interested still more +
 967 audience of U Kyin U's day, for then the throne was disgraced, half

● 175 Burma was lost, and men were depressed and tired of life; many
 [643] shunned the court and lived in retirement and in peace, and some
 turned to the comforts of religion and the monastery. And there was
 the eternal question of succession, for Alaungpaya's dynasty—the
 last in Burma—did not settle the succession by any fixed rule; some-
 times brother succeeded brother, at other times son or grandson;
 promises and appointments with regard to the succession were made
 only to be broken later. Men did not know which prince to follow;
 Bagyidaw, the reigning king, was a good man, a kind man, but a
 weak man also, under the thumb of a wicked and scheming queen;
 a kindly man, a good husband, he was responsible for the collapse
 of organization at the court and the resulting British victory;
 it would not do to choose a weak prince like that king and like
 Zayathein; but it was not very safe to choose a strong prince, for he
 might be foolish like Kaywut and be overcome by the wisdom and
 cunning of the British. Men were troubled in mind and weary of
 politics, and that feeling of tiredness with the world is found in
 U Kyin U. In fact the political conditions of the times, especially
 the war with the British, must have contributed much to the ideas
 expressed in the plays; ideas that must have been appreciated
 by the people who had just realized, with the defeat of their forces
 and the death of their General Bandoola—a product of the heroic
 age of triumph—in the recent war, the transitory nature of human
 glory, the bitterness of defeat, and the sufferings of war. The
 sympathetic portrayal of Kaywut was due mainly to the genius
 of the dramatist, but the recent defeat must have contributed some-
 thing towards it, for both U Kyin U and his audience could see in
 Kaywut their own court, foolish but none the less pathetic through
 defeat. They could sympathize with that character as Milton did with
 Satan. The ability to appreciate the point of view of the other side,
 the ability to see the good points in the villain, are also due in some
 measure to the same war, for the Burmese found the British to be
 valiant foes, who treated the captured wounded with loving care—a
 practice unknown before in the East—and found them to be con-
 querors who were kind to the people of the annexed provinces.
 Therefore the plays of U Kyin U are the product of his times.

536* U Kyin U, with his spirits and magic and gods and heroic deeds,
 is doubtless a romantic. His scenes, where some of the characters on
 the stage are supposed not to see and hear the others, though all are

became the patron of U Pon Nya, rebelled successfully against his brother Pagan, and there came into being a promise of better times. He built a new capital, Mandalay, with wide streets and pleasant squares, and his wisdom and statesmanship won him the love of his people and the respect of the British. There was again an understanding between the court and the people, and the court became once more the centre of learning, after the lapse of some fifty years. Treaties of friendship between Burma and Britain and the personal affection the king had for Queen Victoria seemed to assure lasting peace to the country.¹ Dreams of a mighty empire, reflected in the heroic interludes, and to some extent in U Kyin U, were abandoned for ever. Peace and contentment were the keynote of the period, and there entered the drama, restored to the forefront by U Pon Nya, an atmosphere of calm, as opposed to that of strife in U Kyin U. Even in *Wisaya* that calmness prevailed. The epoch ended with the execution of U Pon Nya and the rebellion of Myingun, which caused the death of the heir to the throne, the ablest soldiers, the wisest statesmen, and the most learned scholars of the day, leaving the king alone to rule a country wrapped in gloom and a people torn into different factions over the pressing and difficult problem of succession.

U Pon Nya followed U Kyin U in expressing political opinions in his plays, but he went further and used the drama as a political weapon. In *Paduma* he attacked those ladies of the court who had not shown enough respect or patronage to him, and he was so successful that he became a power in the land. The king, the crown prince, and the chief queen realized this, and they used *The Water-seller* to announce to the people, who were secretly getting ready for a civil war, that the threatened rupture between the brothers, king and prince, happily, would not materialize. Even after its author's death, the play was once specially performed at court, to test opinion with regard to the king's plan to appoint an able prince, who was far removed from the line of succession, as heir to the throne. In the middle of the performance, a senior prince said: 'If father wants to

¹ One of the most prized possessions of King Mindon was a gold watch which Queen Victoria had presented him, and which he always wore. During the Indian Mutiny, in spite of temptation, he remained friendly and even sent help to the British, saying that he would never 'strike a friend in trouble'. Cf. G. E. Harvey, *History of Burma*, school edition: the ordinary edition gives the history up to 1824 only.

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appoint a lowly prince as crown prince, there will be no objection on our part. But it does not mean that he will become king for, look at *The Water-seller*. The project was consequently abandoned. This incident illustrates the power of the drama in the politics of the time. *Kawothala* was probably meant to convey to a small section of the people who were against treating with the British and wanting revenge the doctrine that destiny, a worthy foe, and the interests of a country would act against any personal motive of revenge. *Wizaya* was written to win over supporters for Prince Myingun. He had been wild and troublesome as the youthful *Wizaya*, and the suggestion was that Myingun would bring greatness to Burma if he were but entrusted with the throne. Also, as Myingun had the project of killing both his father and father-in-law, the crown prince, the play was probably meant to spread the doctrine that the destined greatness of a country called for, and justified, sacrifices. The play was so popular that probably Myingun thought wrongly that public opinion had been moulded to give him support when he rebelled. The rebellion failed, and U Pon Nya lost his life, chiefly through the very play which most Burmese critics acclaim as his masterpiece.

CHAPTER V

THE DECADENT PERIOD

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1. THE DRAMA FROM 1866 TO 1877

THE years that followed the Myingun rebellion and the execution of U Pon Nya were years of distress and discontent. The rebellion had taken its toll of able men, and the king was left alone to rule a country, disheartened especially for economic reasons. Lower Burma was being developed by the British, and the resulting increase in commerce with the west was changing the existing economic conditions in both Lower and Upper Burma. Naturally, the period of transition was one of distress and discontent. The English and French were rivals in their desire to gain control of Burmese trade relations, and the Burmese played on the rivalry by bargaining, making secret treaties, and asking exorbitant prices for favours granted, thereby denying economic stability to the country. The king was without advisers and a dying man, and as the eternal question of succession—the bane of Burmese politics—was inappreciable of solution, the English and French struggled for influence, and consequently, the palace was one mass of intrigue. Corruption was rife in the kingdom, administration was neglected, the judges took bribes, and robbers roamed the country at will. Amidst such adverse conditions, the drama could not flourish, and though the plays of U Pon Nya were still acted, studied and imitated, no dramatist of even moderate ability appeared.

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We have seen that from the beginning, song and dance were the main forms of entertainment on the stage. Even when the Siamese plays were being presented at court and influencing the drama all over the country, the song and dance were still important, first, because of the earlier tradition, second, because the professional actors were in reality singers and dancers, and third, because the song was of great importance in the Ramayana play. However, with the coming of developed plays, the dance was eliminated, although the song occasionally remained. In U Kyin U's plays the dance did not

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CHAPTER VI

THE AFTERMATH

1. DRAMATIC PERFORMANCES AFTER THE ANNEXATION

175 THE proclamation of annexation of the whole country as a province of the Indian Empire on 1 January 1886 came as a surprise to the people, for although it was realized that the end of the Burmese kingdom was inevitable, the general expectation was that the British would turn Upper Burma into an internally independent state of the same pattern as the native states of India. It was indeed a great shock, and the country was plunged into chaos. The old order was at an end, and men did not know what the new would be like. Many felt that the nation had been finally destroyed, and rather than accept the changed conditions, they chose to fight desperately and then die on the scaffold. Completely bewildered by the events, they fought without unity or organization, for the throne around which they had usually rallied was no longer in existence. The resulting guerilla warfare brought disorder and suffering to the whole country until 1890 when tranquillity was restored. The country went back to normal and entered upon a new period of prosperity. Literature flourished again and dramatic performances were revived all over the country.

536* The professional actors were left supreme in the field of dramatic entertainment and, unhampered by critical scholars, they followed their own ideas of what a dramatic performance should be. Singing and dancing and theatrical effect were all that they considered important. A play was only to be a framework for song and dance, and even dialogue was of no importance to them. They made no attempt to revive or even preserve the 'old' drama, nor did they try to model a new one on it. They used the 'old' plays or their own imitations of them as a framework for controlling loosely the course of their performance. There was little interest in the actual play. For one thing, it was never acted right up to its conclusion. During the performance certain songs and dances had to be repeated again and again on the audience applauding persistently, while the play itself stood still. So when

536* Burmese drama before, and most of U Ku's plays and *The History of*
 177 *Thaton* and *Saw-phay* and *Saw-may* were produced at that theatre.
 345 Admission to a performance was by payment, a practice alien to
 dramatic performances before the decadent period. The rise of
 'matinee idols' resulted in the chief actor, instead of the leader of the
 orchestra, becoming the head of a troupe of actors. Formerly, a
 dramatic performance took place during the afternoon or early evening,
 but now because of the repeated applause for the popular 'idols',
 a performance lasted throughout the night.

554 I have stated how the prejudice against professional actors increas-
 536* ed rather than diminished through the coming of popular actors or
 178 actresses and the resulting rivalry between different troupes. But
 the prejudice was gradually overcome through the efforts of one man,
 Po Sein, who used to perform with two ex-soldiers standing beside him
 with rifles. By about 1912, his reputation as a leading actor was firmly
 established, and from that time onwards he concerned himself with
 raising the prestige of his profession by destroying the bitterness and
 the ugliness that had crept into it. By his charm of manner and
 personality, he soon established himself as the undisputed leader of
 the profession. His generous gifts to charity and irreproachable
 conduct soon acquitted the profession from the charge of immorality
 and irreligiosity. During the Great War he contributed much
 to the Red Cross Fund. For his services to charity and his profession,
 he was given a title by the Government in 1919. Such an honour had
 never been given before to an actor (had such a thing happened under
 the Burmese kings or even before 1914, the officials would certainly
 have vehemently protested, taking it as an insult to their class), and the
 Government's action was the final denial of the old dictum that actors
 and beggars were outside the pale of good society.

2. THE PUPPET SHOW

536* According to common tradition, the Burmese puppet show came
 175 into being long before the drama, but as our knowledge of the history
 of the puppet show before the reign of Bodawpaya (1782-1819) is
 meagre, perhaps it will be better to consider first the puppet's history
 from that reign.

[645] It will be remembered that, as stated in Chapter II, Bodawpaya,
 under whom the court and the 'people's' dramas united together to
 give rise to a national drama, created a new ministry, that of the stage.
 The new minister, being a conservative courtier, wanted the drama

BURMESE DRAMATIC PRACTICE

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to be under the direct control of the state. But as living actors were now past such control, he turned his attention towards puppets, which were in great demand by the people. He realized the possibilities of puppets in the newly arisen national drama. The puppet show, which was then entirely independent of the drama and the living actors, started with different animals coming out one by one, and each gave a special dance to a particular tune of its own, played by the orchestra, then a *zangyee*¹ appeared and danced, and finally, a prince and princess came out, made love, sang and danced. The puppets were from 2½ to 3 feet in height, and were worked by strings. As stage, there was a raised platform, with a black curtain, behind which the show-men stood and manipulated the puppets. The men's hands were visible, but as the platform was about four feet high and the audience had to look up, the hands did not distinctly come into the line of vision. The platform was about twenty feet in length, and the width of the part in front of the curtain was about four feet.

The minister put the puppet show under direct state patronage and control. Under him the puppet show became similar to an ordinary dramatic presentation except that puppets performed instead of living actors. The use of puppets to act the play of course caused the introduction of new puppets, but it also rendered the *zangyee* and animal puppets unnecessary; yet they were retained all

¹ *Zangyee* is the Burmese term for an alchemist. It is a derivative of the Indian word *yaga* but the Burmese alchemist has little in common with the Indian ascetic. It is an example of how names of Pali and semi-Buddhist origin were applied to already-existing native ideas.

A man (but not a woman) becomes a *zangyee* when he has introduced into his body the right metal-compounds. To obtain those compounds, he has to experiment on metals with quicksilver or iron. In the first case, he becomes a 'quicksilver *zangyee*' and in the second, an 'iron *zangyee*', but both have the same powers. A *zangyee* lives for millions of years, and can travel in the air, in water, or under the earth, for his body has reached the state when it is beyond the ordinary laws of nature. A halfway stage in the experiments is reached when a 'stone of live metal' (equivalent to the medieval 'philosopher's stone') is obtained. A person in actual possession of the stone can fly in the air and travel under the earth, but his powers are entirely dependent on the stone, i.e. his body is still an ordinary human body. The stone turns lead into silver and brass into gold. It will be seen that a Burman striving to become a *zangyee* has much in common with the medieval European alchemist.

The beliefs connected with the *zangyee* are still widely current. For a detailed account of Burmese alchemy, see the writer's 'Alchemy and Alchemists in Burma' in *Poll-Less*, December 1933.

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● 175 the same. Therefore after the minister's innovation, the puppet
536* show was actually a combination of two different things, the old
puppet show as seen in the animal puppets coming out to dance, and
the new puppet play. To many people it must have seemed that the
minister did not really introduce any new thing, but only lengthened
and made more elaborate that part of the show devoted to the prince
and princess. It should be remembered that the Burmese had no
puppet drama. In India, in Java, in Siam, in Bali, and in Turkey,
there was an actual puppet drama, but in Burma the puppet
show was entirely dependent for its plays on the drama of living
actors. The minister imposed two restrictions on the puppet show.

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First, the plays presented by puppets must either be founded on
the *Jatakas*, or on the great events in the nation's history. Second,
the dress, manners, and customs of the king and his court presented
on the puppet stage should be correct in every detail.

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The innovations of the able minister resulted in the rise of a new
class of puppet show-men. They were mostly drawn from the ranks
of the professional actors, but they were of proved ability and ex-
perience, and had to serve at least some months of apprenticeship.
The show-men were never looked down upon, and the living actors
themselves held them in respect. The puppet show-men were very
conservative. State control ended with the death of the minister,
perhaps because his successors were not so able; but the show-men
kept their stage exactly the same as it was in the time of the minister,
except that they presented the plays of U Kyin U, most of which
were founded neither on the *Jatakas* nor on historical events.
During the decadent period, the puppets stuck to the 'old' plays,
and introduced no innovations either in stage-craft or in dramatic
technique. The annexation by the British in 1886 was disastrous
to the puppet show, for, unlike the living actors, the puppets were
almost totally dependent on court patronage. When the country
became peaceful again by about 1885, the puppet show-men made
gallant attempts to revive their shows, and all over Burma they gave
performances. But the show belonged to a dead past, and the
conservatism of the show-men would not allow the introduction of
anything new. The old show-men died out, and there were not
many new-comers, for the profession demanded a term of apprentice-
ship and its conservatism did not suit the young men, products of the
changed conditions. The result was that the puppet troupes gradually
disappeared. In 1921, when a puppet performance was given at

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INTRODUCTORY

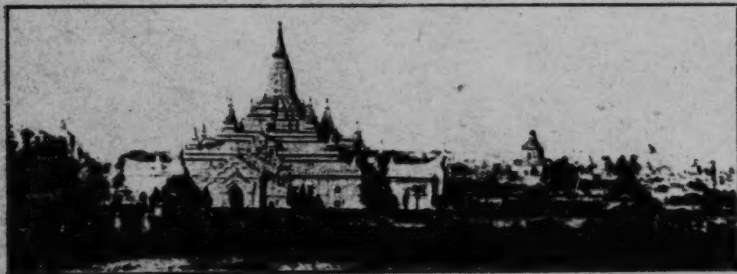


7. ANCIENT GATE, WITH FIGURES OF
 THADYA-MIN AND KEINNAVA.

is part of India. The phrase *Indo-China* is also misleading unless in respect of geography. In respect of climate, flora and fauna, *Further India* is not inapplicable. A probable Indo-Aryan admixture exists in the north-east (Arakán). But Burma Proper and Pegu are as distinct from India as Tibet itself.

The original Burman tribes are conjectured to have pushed their way south from the mountains of Tibet. They divided into three principal branches, Arakán (*Rakáing*, *Yakáing*) on the west, Paung on the east, and Burma (*Bamá*), which attained to the chief position, in the middle, on the northern Irawadi (*E-ya wadi*). Nothing is known of the early history of these nations. But it is certain that in 1000 A.D. Burma was a large and powerful kingdom, with its seat at Pagán. About that time the first historical conquest of the lower Irawadi was

effected. From the fact that the country was not permanently subdued it may be inferred that the power of the Mun or Peguan race (later called *Talaing*) was not greatly inferior to that of the Burman. The Muns, from the affinities of their language, are conjectured to be of Annamitic origin. There is mention of the Pagán kingdom independently of the Burman chronicles, and there is above all the evidence of the ruins of Pagán, probably the mightiest of their kind. They testify to the power of the kingdom and the influence of the



8. ANANDA PAYA, PAGAN.

BURMA

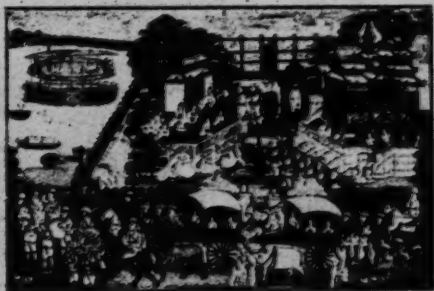
●175 religion which actuated the kings to build temples on such a scale. In
[779] 1300 A.D. the power of the Pagan kingdom had spent itself, in a great degree
owing, as the Burmans believe, to the drain of the temple-building. But the
force of the religion was unabated. Burma fell a prey to Shan invaders, who
snatched the dominion for nearly two hundred years but failed to consolidate

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9. BURMAN GENERAL GOING OUT TO WAR (APPLIQUE WORK).

it, splitting up into principalities like those of their native hills. The weakness
of Burma allowed the Mun power to develop. The sixteenth century saw the
rise of Pegu and the establishment of a shifting empire over Burma. Exhausted
by wars, Pegu in turn declined and lay at the mercy of Siam (*Yodaya*) when
Paung (*Tamug-ngu*) came to the rescue. In the seventeenth century the Paung-
Peguan dynasty brought the Mun empire to its zenith, from which it waned in
the eighteenth. Towards the middle of the latter century the Burmans under
Alaung Paya rose against the Mun garrisons, overthrew Pegu and finally
established the empire of Burma. Arakan was incorporated; Siam was
subjugated and made tribu-
tary for a time. The empire
directed its ambition to the
west. Manipur was overrun
and the Arakanese pretensions
in Chittagong were revived,
[175] which produced friction with
[726] the British power in India.
[532] Burman dominion had been a
career of unbroken conquest
in the memory of the then
generation; the nation believed
itself invincible. In the elation
of their prowess at home they

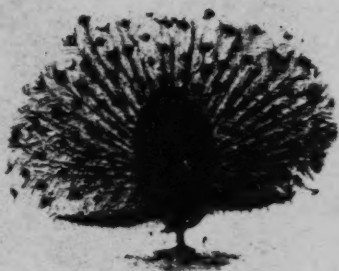


10. BURMAN PICTURE OF THE FALL OF MANDALAY.

INTRODUCTORY

5

failed to form a conception of the power of nations beyond the sea. The Burmans had no intelligence branch in the shape of a sea-borne trade of their own. So they provoked a trial of strength, and after a struggle, which they made a long and well-nigh desperate one for their well-equipped opponents, succumbed. Burman empire was over, the ancient kingdom only remained. The people had learned the lesson, but not so their rulers, who suffered affairs to come to a thrice-repeated crisis. (See CHRONOLOGY, 1825, 1852, 1885.)

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11. THE NATIONAL EMBLEM OF BURMA.

133 of the delta of the Irawadi, by which fresh silt-beds are raised to the cultivation
 134 level. The town of Tháton, now sixteen miles from the coast and without a sea
 approach, was, in historic times, a port. Ships came up to Tenasserim in the
 south, the ancient emporium of trade across the Peninsula to Siam, and to
 Akauttaung in the north, and probably to Pegu. A mass

of precise data on this subject was collected by the late
 Mr. John Merrifield, who came to the conclusion that
 Tenasserim had risen fifteen to twenty feet in the course
 of the last 300 years. In 1900, ten and a half million acres
 were cultivated in Burma. The rice crop was estimated
 at three and a half million tons, of which two millions
 were exported, worth £14,000,000. Fallow lands were
 estimated at five and a half million acres and arable
 waste at twenty-four millions, out of a gross area of
 one hundred and one millions. In 1872 a considerable
 firm failed over the enterprise of bringing a few thousand
 acres of reputed arable waste at Kayásu under cultivation;
 the crops got so much water that they rotted. The area
 has lain waste ever since. Most of the waste land granted
 to companies has been resumed, on account of their failure
 to satisfy the condition of utilising the land. The conditions
 which render land suitable for wet cultivation are less simple
 than they appear at the first glance. It is possible that the
 estimate of the arable waste is much too high.

Where the fields depend on the surface-water for their
 supply, a margin of fallow has to be left; where they get
 a deposit of river-silt it is unnecessary. If manure is
 plentiful it is taken out on the fields. But this is seldom
 the case because the cattle are so much at large. On
 the outskirts of the rice-fields, which are dispersed in
 groups throughout the *kwin*, fallow land may readily
 relapse into waste. The depopulation of Pegu (Chronology,
 1570, 1591-1740) threw great areas out of cultivation.
 Anyone was free to reclaim waste, and is, so silt.
 In Burma Proper, where good land is much scarcer than



108. THE RICE PLANT IN THE EAR.

in Pegu, proprietors are fixed on the soil in many places by royal grants
 (*the mye, dbabaing*). There were also royal demesne lands leased to tenants.

In the dry zone of Burma Proper, rice cultivation is impracticable except
 where rivers flood their margins or where facilities for irrigation exist. Rice

GOLD AND SILVER

109



257. TOWN SILVERSMITH.

of plain gold bangles (*let-kauk*), and their ear-plugs consist of a roll of sheet-gold coiled to the thickness of a finger. The Burmans admire a red-yellow gold with dull surface. They enhance the effect by a red colouring of the interstices of the work, in the same way as the Chinese do. Neck ornaments (*bayè*) are of several kinds. The commonest one used to be the thick roll of gold filigree, worn in front of the neck. This is now replaced by *bayè* of several chains, for the most part jewelled. On the breast is worn the broad *daliadn*, also formerly of filigree, but now of jewels and pearls. Strings of real and imitation pearls are worn; and jewelled pins

and gold or jewelled combs in the hair. Rings are worn on the fingers and gold filigree buttons of the Chinese type on the jackets. The last two are the only ornaments now used by men. Anklets are worn by children.

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● 175 Gold and silver coinage on a European model was adopted by the kings of Burma about the middle of the nineteenth century—the “peacock” coins, struck from dies engraved in Paris. Rough coins of lead used to circulate. The coins shown in No. 238 are those of Arakan kings from 1500 to 1750 A.D., from the collection of the late Mr. C. H. White. Before the introduction of coinage,



238. SILVER COINS OF THE ARAKAN KINGS.

BURMA



239. GOLD-BEATERS.

circulates in Burma is three times the value of the lowest Indian coin. Notes have no circulation as yet among the Burmans, although they now bear their figures of value in Burmese.

316 Rubies and sapphires (*Kyau-myat*) are separated from the sand and gravel of certain localities, notably Mogók, in the same way as gold is. Hard gems are cut with gem-dust on a horizontal wheel driven by a fly-wheel and treadle in a regular lathe-stand. Rock-crystal is cut in this way and also on a hone. Jade is found at Mogaung and is exported to China. Amber is found at Bamáw.

306 Gold-leaf is used in enormous quantities for gilding *zedi* and images. Only pure gold is employed. The paper for separating the gold-leaf in the book in

gold and silver bullion were used for exchange, as they still are in the Shan States. Chinese gold is current in the form of foil with the market stamp of fineness. It can be conveniently cut with scissors and weighed. Travellers often carry their bullion in this form. Silver is used by the Shans in the form of ingots which have to be hewn and assayed when making a purchase. The standard for commodities, wages and rent is silver, the fluctuation being referred to the gold. The lowest coin that



340. ALCHEMISTS.



370. HEADMAN MUSTERING HIS VILLAGERS.

CHAPTER VII

POLITICAL

WITH alien races planted on his soil and the watchful rivalry of the Taláing 175 ●
to contend with, the Burman had hourly need to guard his camp. Besides the 726
enemies without, and their potential allies within, brigand bands of his own 579
race had to be held in check. The chronic wars of Burman and Taláing (Mun),
who were separated by no natural frontier,
have left their record in the stockaded
villages between Prome and Mimbú, a no-
man's-land in which soldiers were impressed
to fight, now on this side, now on that, and
where, on being disbanded, they continued
the plunder by which the armies subsisted
in war. The traditions of brigandage and
the exploits of noted leaders are remem-
bered, and such enterprises are still a resort
of the *vauriens* of a village or country-side
when they perceive their chance—*damyá-
sáik sádyá!* These brigands (*damyá*, gang-
robbers, dacoits) lay their plans to surprise
a village while the men are away at work
or endeavour to create a panic by a night
attack and so obtain their booty without risk
of an encounter. An occasional gang might



371. BURMAN OUTPOST STOCKADE.

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[623]



372. VILLAGE ELDERS IN CONCLAVE.

the horrors of barbarous war. At present brigandage is of very sporadic occurrence. Travellers are perfectly safe.

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[579]

Throughout Burma every man was liable to serve in war. He would have his own sabre and pike and would be provided with musket and ammunition, but no further accoutrements. Latterly the king's body-guards wore a sort of uniform (No. 9). Cannon are mentioned as early as 1350, and a century later, matchlocks were in use. Caesar Frederick in 1569 speaks of pikes and

arquebuses and good cannon. When disbanded, the soldiers had to surrender their muskets, but numbers were smuggled away, to add to the rigour of the guerilla waged by brigands and the severity of the villagers' retaliation.

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The military leader is called *Bd*; the civil governor or minister of the king, *Wun*, which means a burden or trust. The former might be a young man, the latter but rarely so. Age and influence are almost synonymous in Burma. If the elders—headmen, *ladyt*—are agreed upon a thing, it is done. The village elders represent the fundamental substratum of government in Burma. They are consulted by the officials on matters affecting the people, whose natural, if unofficial,

disperse as quickly as it was recruited or else it might develop into a band under a regular leader (*Bd*) and become the scourge of the country, rapidly attacking points separated by days' journeys. Against such bands the villagers combine and keep guard; torches are ready for night alarms. But when the brigands are too strong, the villagers have no choice but to enter into league with them and pay blackmail if they would not experience



373. BURMESE OFFICIAL RECEIVING APPLICANTS.

ROYALTY, HISTORY

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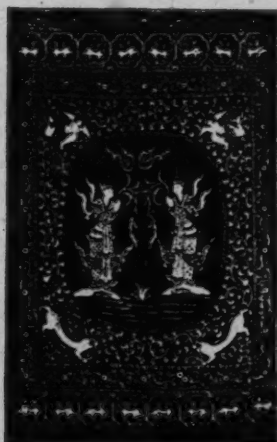


286. TEMPLES RAISED BY A MODERN KING (THE KUTHODAW
p. 122).

historic centres of Burman
dominion. Sagáing was
abandoned for the last
time in 1776 for a new
capital at Amayapóya
(*Anarapúra*—Abode of
Immortals) half-way be-
tween Ava (*Inwa*) and
the modern capital Man-
dalé, which was founded
in 1857, after the accession
of King Mindón Min.
The most ancient capital
is Tagáung, one hundred

miles north of Mandalé. Other capitals were Shwébo, Myinzaing, Pannya. The capitals of the Taláing dominion were Thatón, Fegu, and Prome (*Pye*). Rangoon (*Yangón*), at the meeting point of five navigable channels, and with anchorage for the largest ships, has out-distanced all competitors since the modern development of commerce.

For the history of Burma the only available source is the official chronicle kept by command of the kings—*mahá-yazawin*. The first part is occupied with the legendary origin of the race from the cloud-dwellers—*Byammd* (the Burman form of *Brahma*).^{*} The names and doings of legendary persons follow, and lines of legendary kings. The earliest historical facts which emerge are the founding of Tagáung, and incidents relating to the Buddha and the councils of his church in India. It is believed by Phayre that the *Savanna Bhumi* of ancient Indian books refers to Thatón, and that under *Chrysl Chersonesus* Ptolemy refers to the Eastern Peninsula of Asia. We do not reach a connected history till the founding of Pagan about 100 A.D. From that epoch onwards the history of the peninsula, until the Burman Empire was consolidated and the dynasty of



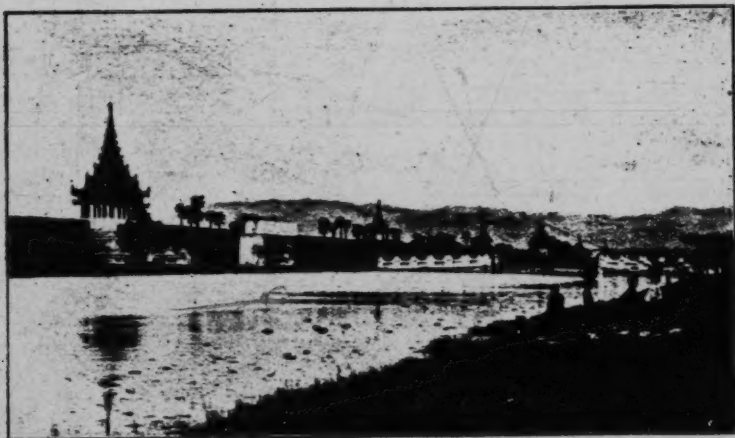
288. FIGURES OF BYAMMA
(EMBROIDERY).

^{*} The name is also written *Myammd*, but commonly pronounced *Bamd*, of which "Burma(h)" and "Birma" are corruptions.

BURMA

175 Aláung Payá established in 1754, is the involved account of the struggles for mastery of its three imperial races, the Burman, the Mun, and the Shan.* As already stated in the Introduction, the isolation of the valley of the Irawadi from the neighbouring civilisations by great natural barriers, favoured the development of an independent and distinct civilisation. The neutralization of those barriers it is that now exposes Burma to the sudden competition of races inured to worse conditions.

* See Appendix A, CHRONOLOGY.



387. THE CITY MOAT.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A.

CHRONOLOGY.

Compiled from Spearman's Gazetteer of British Burma and Phayre's History of Burma.

B.C.

1000. Legendary origin of the Burman kingdom. Founding of Tagáung by Abbi Yaza (Raja), a conquered Sakya king of Kapilavastu ("Kapilawát") in Audh.

865. Era of King Kawza begins. Thirty-two kings follow, ending with Binnaka Yaza.

825. King Kan Yaza-dyi is established at Kalé on the Chindwin. His son Umidawitta migrates to Kyauppadaung in Arakán and establishes the Arakán Kingdom. King Kan Yaza-ngè is established in Tagáung.

691. Era of King Kawza closes. Era of Bôdaw Yuzana, Raja of the Sakyas, grandfather of Gaudama, begins.

623. Birth of Gaudama, afterwards the Buddha, according to the legend; according to historical researches, sixty to one hundred and thirty-one years later.

Chinese irruption into Burma. King driven south to Malé. Tripartition of kingdom. Prince Doza Yaza of Kapilavastu marries the chief widow of the king and founds old or northern Pagan. Seventeen reigns follow, up to 443 B.C.

588. Gaudama quits the palace and enters on his mission as Buddha. Miraculous visit of the Buddha and five hundred *yakhs* to Sagáing. Changes in the earth prophesied—the formation of the Bo-u lake, the rise of Popa mount (volcanic), the retreat of the sea from Thayékkittiaya near Prome (cf. p. 50), and the spread of Buddhism.

543. Demise of Gaudama Buddha. Era of Gaudama begins (lasts till 82 A.D.). First Buddhist council.

523. King Ajatasatira collects the relics of the Buddha.

443. Two Burman kingdoms, Tagáung and Pyu (Pye, Prum, Prome?) Prince Labedutra of Tagáung hunts the great boar, which he kills at Wettokýn near Prome.

Second Buddhist council.

350. King Asoka (*Asoka 'ma'*) of Pataliputra distributes the relics of the Buddha. The king's son Mahinda goes as missionary *yakhs* to Ceylon. $\bar{O}$ Outara and $\bar{O}$ Sawnasé missionary *yakhs* to Burma.

341. Third Buddhist council.

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448. IMAGE FOUND IN A CAVE NEAR AN ANCIENT TALANG TOWN.

175 •

[172]

APPENDICES

B.C.

- 175 150. Legendary visit of Gaudama to Arakán (?) The *Mahā-myammuni* image modelled from the Buddha, and cast by King Sandathurā.

80. The Buddhist canon reduced to writing by Vattāgāmini.

A.D.

65. The Buddhist Scriptures brought to China.

82. New era of Pyn King Thamūndayit. (Lasts till 638.)

104. The Muns destroy Thayēkittaya. King Thamūndayit driven north, where he establishes New Pagán. Eighteen reigns follow.

128. Rise of Magadu in Martaban (*Métama*).

400. The missionary *yahán* Buddhagōsa from Ceylon brings the Buddhist scriptures to Pegu and reforms the religious practice (see Phayre, p. 31).

410. Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Fa Hian visits Ceylon.

450. Burma invaded by Shan Chinese (*Tarók*—Tartar?).

518. Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Chun Yun visits Ceylon.

552. Buddhism introduced into Japan.

629. Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Hiouen Sung visits Ceylon; remained till 648.

638. Era and dynasty of King Pupasaw—the present era.

Accession of King Pymbya, to whom nine of the temples at Pagán are ascribed.

Siam (*Yodayá*) converted to Buddhism.

800. Irruption of Shans into Burma. (Date earlier? Pressure of Chinese on the N.E. the probable cause, Phayre, p. 12.) King Saw Yahán introduced *nagá* worship.

1017. Accession of King Anáwata Minsaw the Great. Abolishes *nagá* worship. Builds temples at Pagán

Invades China to procure the Buddhist scriptures and sacred tooth-relic. A model of the relic procured and deposited in the *Shawzīgón Payá*,

Nyaung-á. Invades Arakán and endeavours to take the *Mahā-myammuni* image. Invades Pegu, captures Thatón and brings away the Buddhist scriptures to Pagán. Takes Tenaserim from Siam.

1085. Southern provinces rebel, but are re-subjugated. King Kyansithu of Pagán builds *Ananda Payá* and *Shwe Kū Payá*. Establishes relations with the Buddhists of Ceylon. Repairs the shrines at Boddhagāya

through the agency of the King of Arakán.

1160. King Kyansithu of Pagán murdered by his son after reigning seventy-five years.

1167. Accession of King Narapati Sithu the Great. Empire established over all the kingdoms except Arakán. Embassy sent to the King of Ceylon, who deposes five *yahán* to teach Buddhism in Burma.

1204. Burma invaded from India. Burman sovereign deposed—*Kalā-hyá min*, Cambodia and Arayamama invaded from Ceylon.

1284. Burma invaded by China and tribute demanded. King Narashihepade driven south and pursued to Tarók-hmaw before Promé, whence he fled to Pathéin—*Tarók-hyá-min* Pagán referred to by Marco Polo as the capital of a great kingdom.

1300. Burma invaded by Shans. King Kyawzwa of Pagán made a recluse. China interferes



440. MAHA-MYAMMUNI IMAGE.

[532]

APPENDICES

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A.D.

on behalf of Burma and besieges Myinzaing, but without effect. Pagán kingdom parcelled out among Shan leaders. Siam recovers Tenasserim. Pegu regains independence. Prome, Taung-ngu (Paung), Myinzaing, Pinya, Sagáing, Thayét assert independence. Pagán dynasty continues in name only. Shan dynasty of Beinnaka established in Burma Proper.

175 •

1306. King Zaw-aw Thin Hmaing of Pegu recaptures Tenasserim from Siam. Foundation of chronic hostility between Pegu and Siam.

1330. Tenasserim recovered and Pegu made tributary by Siam (Siamese accounts).

1348. King Sinbyu Shin of Pegu. First mention of cannon. The Mun have fire-arms.

1364. Inwa ("Ava," *Ratanapáya*—city of gems) founded by Shan-Burman King Rahúla (Thadó Minbya).

1385. Accession of King Yazadiyit the Great, of Pegu. War with Burma. Chinese interfere on behalf of latter. Arakán supports Burma. Peace concluded, 1421, on the basis that Prome is Burman territory.

1423. Death of King Yazadiyit of Pegu.

1438. The calendar adjusted by moving the date back two years. Nicolo d' Conti, traveller from Italy, describes Thatôn as a seaport. Other travellers from the West about this period—Ludovico Barthema of Bologna, Hieronimo Adorno, Hieronimo de San Stefano and the Russian, Athanasius Nitikin.

1444. Chinese invasion of Burma repelled.

1446. Queen Shinsawbu of Pegu.

1454. Ali Khan usurps the kingdom of Arakán. Burman kingdom weakened by inroads from the North. Adventurers from Europe in the service of the rival kingdoms.

1461. King Dammazedi of Pegu. Zealous Buddhist.

1505. Shan Swabwa of Ónaung overthrows the Shan-Burman king of Ava.

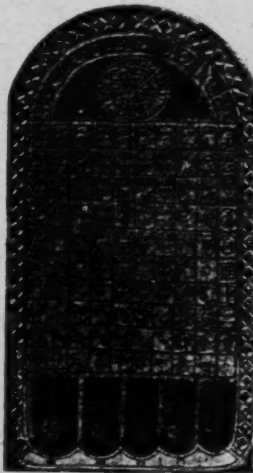
1530. Five independent kingdoms—Ava (Shan), Prome (Shan-Burman), Taung-ngu (Paung), Pegu (Mun) and Arakán. Taung-ngu begins to rise in power.

Thohambwa succeeds to the kingdom of Ava. Massacres of *yahdu* and plunder of *sedí* take place. The king assassinated, 1542.

Travellers of the period—Ruy Nunes d'Alcunha, 1511. Giovanni de Sylveira (Arakán). Antonio Carrea (treats with the King of Pegu on behalf of Portugal, 1519). Odoardo Barbessa (reports the King of Pegu to be very powerful, 1520). Caesar Frederick. Ralph Fitch. (Memoirs, ed. J. Horton Ryley. See Jardine, introduction to Sangermano's *Burmese Empire*.) Soldiers of fortune—Caspar d' Cruz, Boniface Damien, Giovanni Cayero and Ferdinand Mendes Pinto.

1540. Martabán (Móttamá) besieged by Siam.

1550. King Tabín Shwe-tí of Pegu advances on Ava, but is repulsed by a confederation of the Shans. Pagán is occupied and the other Burman kingdoms subjugated. Siam recovers Tenasserim. Nawratha (afterwards called *Bayin-nawng*—next to the king) leads an expedition against Siam with assistance of the Portuguese adventurers, Seixas and Cayero, who bring five hundred Portuguese soldiers.



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A.D.

- 175 1550. Bayin-naung (brother-in-law of the last king of Pegu) succeeds, under the title of Simbrymyā Shin. Thamēin Taw, representative of the ancient Mun dynasty, is beheaded. Expedition to and capture of Ava. Advance to Zimmē. Shan states subjugated, excepting Theinni. Advance on Laos, as far as the Mēkong. 1562, Siam invaded and the capital Ayōdayā captured. Tenasserim recovered from Siam. 1575, the Shan states re-subjugated. Troops sent to the aid of the King of Ceylon. Zenith of Mun empire.
1570. Pegu exhausted and depopulated. In his old age the emperor becomes fanatical, compels foreigners to embrace Buddhism (the solitary example of the kind) and to respect animal life. Mahomedan butchers mentioned at this period. 1581, preparations for invading Arakān interrupted by the death of the emperor.
1581. Yuwa Yaza (crown prince) succeeds.
1591. Nanda Bayin succeeds to the empire of Pegu. Successful expedition against Ava. Advance against Siam "with 5000 elephants and 300,000 men." Ayōdayā besieged without success, and again in 1593. Pegu drained of men and resources. The emperor gives way to senseless savagery; immolates his relatives (witnessed by Gaspari Balbi, of Venice). Massacres of the people ordered and persecution of the *yakhs*. Taung-ngu and Arakān league against the emperor. The Siamese invader is acclaimed.
1596. The Arakanese advance as far as Thallyn ("Syriam") on Pegu channel, opposite Rangoon. Sack of Pegu. Fabulous accounts of its wealth. Independence of Ava re-established. Siam recovers Tenasserim and besieges Martaban. Taung-ngu attacked by Prome while engaged in repulsing the Siamese. Philip de Brito—a Portuguese ship-boy who grew up in the palace at Arakān—deserts the Arakanese and seizes Syriam for the Portuguese. 1600, Philip de Brito recovers Thamēin for Taung-ngu.
1607. Ava re-subjugates Prome and (1610) Taung-ngu also, and obtains the tooth-relic of the Buddha. Travellers at this period, the Jesuit Boves, Faria y Souza.
1615. De Brito captures Taung-ngu but is attacked and defeated by the King of Ava and is tortured to death. De Brito's Portuguese comrades are sent to Ava.
- King Mahā Damma Yaza of Taung-ngu reconstitutes the empire, with his capital at Ava. The help of Portuguese galleons obtained by sea. The Siamese ally with the Portuguese. Envoys sent to Burma from the Emperor Jehangir and the governor of Bengal.
1616. The Englishman Samuel dies in Burma; his property seized but afterwards restored. The English invited to settle. English factories at Syriam, Prome, Ava, Bamāw. Disputes of English and Dutch settlers. Both compelled to withdraw.
1632. The Mun Emperor Thadō Damma Yaza on the throne, with the capital at Ava; a good and wise ruler. Builds *Kawng-Imdaw Payā*, below Sagāing.
1648. Bintale succeeds, and is succeeded by Mahā Pāyawa Damma Yaza.
1658. An invasion from China repulsed with difficulty.
1661. The Kingdom of Ava usurped by Prome.
- The pirate Gonzales appears in Arakān. Bengal in a disorganized state, of which Arakān takes advantage, and with the help of Gonzales advances as far as Lākimpūr, but is driven back to Chittagong. Gonzales turns the Arakanese fleet against Arakān and commits shocking atrocities. The Viceroy of Goa leagues with the pirate, who nevertheless is eventually beaten.
1664. The Arakanese advance into Bengal as far as Dakka.
1672. Accession of Emperor Thiya Pāyawa Mahā Damma Yaza of Pegu.
1687. Haindyī Island ("Negra's"), at the mouth of the Pathēn River, is taken by Captain Weldon (British) on behalf of the Siamese. At the bidding of the East India Company

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A.D.

the Siamese Governor of Mergui expels British traders ("interlopers"); seventeen British massacred in the scuffle that took place. The British fall into disrepute. A French mission follows. 175

1688. The Governor of Pegu sends a letter to the Governor of Madras asking for British traders to settle in Pegu.
1695. The Burman Government confiscates the goods of Adrian Tilbury, an Englishman who died in Burma; and the ship *SS. Antony and Nicholas*. Messrs. Fleetwood and Sealy deputed by the Madras Government to recover the above, in 1697. Messrs. Bowyear and Alison deputed on the same duty in 1709.
1698. Accession of Emperor Sinbyū Shin Dipata. Non-Buddhist foreigners treated with contempt, but not molested.
1732. First Catholic mission.
1733. Accession of Emperor Sinbyū Shin Dipata II.
1738. Manipūris advance as far as Sagging and destroy temples there.
1740. Pegu-Burman Empire again disintegrating. Pegu exhausted by imposts; even the looms are taxed. The condition of the people wretched. The Muns rise against the Taung-ngu-Peguan dynasty, march north and capture the Emperor Kaungthit. The East India Company have an agent in Pegu.
1746. A Gwe Shan becomes King of Pegu, but abdicates. Binnya Dala elected in his place.
1750. The Muns under the Yuwa Yaza (crown-prince) and Dalaban march north in great force, with the co-operation of renegade Dutch and native Portuguese.
1752. Ava destroyed, the king taken to Pegu (where he was executed two years later on a charge of conspiracy).
1754. Aungmya of Moebo (later Shwebo), afterwards called Alāung Payā, rallies the Burmans to rise against the Mun garrisons, which are dispersed. The Burmans march on Pegu, take the city and capture the emperor. Rangoon (*Yangon*—the end of the strife) is founded and Burman empire proclaimed under Alāung Payā.
1755. Embassy of Captain George Baker to Burma. See his journal (*Oriental Repertory*, London, Dalrymple, 1791). The Emperor Alāung Payā sends a golden letter for delivery to King George III., but it is intercepted.
1756. Murder of Bishop Nerini.
1757. Rising of Muns. Fresh Campaign, in which Pegu is finally subjugated. The name Talding—the vanquished—given to the Mun race. Dalaban, the Mun general, afterwards called Nawratha, enters the service of the Burman Emperor on honourable terms.
- The crew of the French ship *Galatée* are seized.
1758. Manipūris subdued. A rebellion of the Taldings is suppressed.
1759. The British settlers at Negrais are massacred at the instigation of the French. Siam is invaded and siege laid to Ayōdayā, without success.
1760. Death of Alāung Payā. His eldest son Naungdawdyī succeeds, under his father's will that his three sons should reign in succession. Palace intrigues. The capital changed from Shwebo to Sagging.
1761. Captain Alves deputed on a mission to the Burman Emperor.
1763. The Emperor Sinbyushin succeeds his brother Naungdawdyī. The capital changed to Shwebo.
1765. Manipūris, now the ally of the British, is overrun by Burma.
1766. Burman expedition against Zimmē. Tenasserim is recaptured, Siam invaded under the command of Dalaban, Ayōdayā destroyed and the country laid under tribute. The Siamese defence conducted with the help of a British privateer.

A.D.

1767. The Chinese invade Burma with 50,000 men. Their army is repulsed and destroyed.
1769. The Chinese invade Burma and are repulsed again. Their soldiers permitted to return disarmed.
1771. Siam throws off the Burman yoke and recovers Tenasserim. A force is despatched against Siam, of which the Taling brigade mistimes and invests Rangoon. Failing to take the place they retreat to Martaban.
1774. An expedition is sent against Martaban, consisting of 20,000 men and twenty-four guns, which reduces the place.
1775. The Emperor Sinbyu Shin visits Rangoon. Judicial murder of the last Peguan Emperor Binnya Dala. The *Shwe Dagon Payá* is built over, to its present dimensions, and decorated with a magnificent *st.* Siam invaded again, without effect. Manipur overrun again.
1776. Emperor Sinbyu Shin succeeded by his son Singu Min. Capital changed to Sagáing.
1781. Emperor Singu Min dies. Succeeded by Maung Maung, son of Emperor Naungdawdyl, contrary to the will of Aláung Payá, under which his own third son Maung Waing was designated. Maung Waing captures the palace, murders his nephew, and assumes the empire under the title of Bódaw Payá (also called Badón Min, Sinbyu-mya Shin, and Mantayá-dyl). Commits fearful atrocities against his opponents at Páung, where he destroys the whole of the inhabitants, *yakhs* included. Capital changed from Sagáing to Amayapóya (Abode of Immortals).
1782. Rebellion of the Tálkings in Rangoon suppressed. Surgeon W. Hunter visits Burma.
1783. Father Sangermano lands in Burma. (Remained till 1806. See his work *The Burmese Empire*.)
1784. Arakán invaded and subdued. The *Mahá-myanmuni* image brought to Amayapóya (cf. B.C. 150 and A.D. 1017). Arakanese take refuge in British Chittagong and from thence harass the Burmans.
1785. Expedition made against Junkseylon, without success.
1786. Siam invaded without success.
1787. Invasion from Siam repulsed.
1790. Tenasserim recaptured from Siam.
1793. Punitive expedition sent against the Arakanese refugees in Chittagong.
1795. Captain Michael Symes (see his work) sent on a mission to the Emperor of Burma by the Governor-General of India. Burma contends for an envoy from the King of England, on the precedent of the envoy (Lord Macartney) sent to the empire of China. Efforts to negotiate a commercial treaty unsuccessful. Subsequent envoys—Captain Cox, 1803, Lieut. Canning, 1811.
1803. The Amayapóya *gáing* of Burman *yakhs* in Ceylon, protests against the intrusion of caste ideas in the *Thingá* there.
1811. The filibuster Chin Byan overruns Arakán from the base of British Chittagong.



451. COPPER IMAGE DISCOVERED IN THE FOUNDATIONS OF MAHÁ-MYANMUNI. 1786.

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A.D.

1813. Burman embassy to the Governor-General of India.
Adoniram Judson, American Baptist missionary, lands in Burma.
1817. The Burman government intrigues with the Mahrattas.
1819. The Emperor Bôdaw Payá is succeeded by his grandson Badyidaw. Capital changed to Ava, 1823. Troubles with Manipúr; the Rája greets a royal *pyatthat* over his residence. The British arm the Manipúris.
1823. Outrage committed by the Burman government on the British outpost at Shahpúri Island, at Naf, Arakán. Burma warned by the British that war may ensue. The Burmans in reply advance to Kachár.
- 1824 (5th March). British declare war and land their forces. Burman resistance broken, not without aid of the Taldings, on the fall of the able General Mahá Bandúla (24th April, 1825). Cost to British, 4000 men and £5,000,000. Arakán, Martaban and Tenasserim provinces annexed. Indemnity of 1,000,000 rupees imposed on Burma, and a treaty of commerce exacted.
1827. Talding rising in Rangoon.
Mission of Captain Crawford to Ava (see his work).
1829. Inroads made on British territory by Burman brigands, from the base of Martaban. Martaban government bound down by British to restrain Burman subjects.
1837. King Badyidaw deposed and his son Tháyawadi Min proclaimed king in Burma: Capital, Kyammyung and later Ámayapóya. The reign disfigured by barbarities. 1841, the king visits Rangoon.
1845. King Tháyawadi deposed and his son Pagán Min proclaimed. Massacres at the palace.
1851. Extortions practised by the government of Rangoon, and the British traders Lewis and Sheppard ill-treated.
1852. Second British war, which lasts nearly twelve months. Pegu annexed; British Burma Commission organised by Colonel (afterwards Sir) Arthur Phayre, the first Chief Commissioner. Brigandage becomes rife, but is suppressed by degrees.
1853. King Pagán Min deposed and his son Mindón Min proclaimed in Burma.
1855. Mission of Capt. Henry Yule to Ava (see his work).
1857. The Burman capital changed to Mandalay.
1862. A fresh commercial treaty with Burma negotiated by Colonel Phayre.
1866. The rebellion headed by the Myingón-Myingónaing princes, quelled, with the assistance of the British.
1872. Embassy of the King of Burma to the Queen of England.
1878. Death of King Mindón Min. Accession of his son Thlbaw Min. The young king a puppet in the hands of evil ministers. Massacres at the palace.
1884. Massacres in the jail and atrocities at the palace. Disorganization of the state. Approaches made by the Burman government to the French. Third British war. Burman resistance nominal only. The Burman government overthrown, the king deported and the country incorporated in the Indian Empire.
- 1885-87. Local outbreaks of resistance and general revival of brigandage, which are gradually suppressed.

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779* in the middle of the last century, that Burmese women not only enjoyed a much freer and higher position than elsewhere in the East but, in some matters, had attained rights that their sisters in England were still seeking to obtain.²⁶ These and similar aspects of Burmese life must be attributed in large degree to the dominant influence of Buddhism in a country which has been left for hundreds of years, shut away from the surrounding world by its seaboard and mountain barriers, to work out its own salvation with only occasional interference from outside until modern times.

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177 It is possible that the first Buddhist monastery in Burma was established more than two thousand years ago. While we may be sceptical of the legend which attributes the conversion of the first Burmese disciples to the Buddha himself, there is perhaps less reason than formerly to question the persistent Burmese tradition that missionaries were sent from India to Burma after the Third Great Council in the time of Asoka. We have, at any rate, shreds of reliable evidence relating to the early centuries of the Christian era. In Burma, as elsewhere, the archaeologist has been active in recent years and there are also illuminating references in Chinese and other texts. Examining the evidence now available, Mr. Nihar-Ranjan Ray has presented a substantial argument for the conclusion that Buddhism was introduced to Burma possibly in Asoka's day, probably by the third century A.D. and certainly by the fifth century A.D.²⁷ In these earlier centuries, Burma was parcelled into small kingdoms, and all that can be said is that, at certain capitals, there were strong centres of Buddhist influence.²⁸

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177 It is, however, sufficient for our present purpose to be able to trace the dominating influence of Buddhism throughout the country from the eleventh century onwards. In this century, the turning point in Burmese story, the curtain of history lifts to reveal A-naw-ra-ha, the Burmese Constantine, moving southwards from his capital at Pagan to vanquish the king of Thaton and annex his dominion. According to the Burmese chroniclers, the motive for this advance was not mere lust of conquest but zeal for the true faith. King A-naw-ra-ha had been converted by a monk from the south, Shin Arahan of Thaton. But 'without the scriptures there can be no study, without study there can be no intuition.' To obtain these scriptures, the Pali scriptures, A-naw-ra-ha must needs subdue his rival at Thaton who possessed them.

000 What is of further importance for our present inquiry is the fact that

²⁶ Forbes, *British Burma and Its People*, chap. III, p. 55.

²⁷ Ray, *op. cit.* chap. I, pp. 33ff.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, chap. I, pp. 33ff., 81; cf. Taw Sein Kho, *Census of India Report (Burma 1901)*, XII, 32.

INTRODUCTION

11

What is of further importance for our present inquiry is the fact that the tradition thus established throughout Burma was the Hinayāna tradition, not the Mahāyāna.²⁰ It will therefore be the more significant if we find in Burmese Buddhism a positive conception of Nirvana, for, in the past, scholars have frequently associated a negative conception with the Hinayāna tradition, enlarging the distance between the two schools: Nirvana might spell paradise in China or Japan, it was argued, but for Southern Buddhists it was the Void.

There were, it is true, outposts of the Mahāyāna faith in Burma, notably at Pagan, where Mahāyāna cults survived for perhaps two centuries after A-naw-ra-htha's conversion, tolerated by the now dominating Hinayāna tradition which absorbed some elements of the sister faith.²¹ There is also evidence, not only of Mahāyāna rivalry, but also of Brahmanical Hinduism (as at Pagan) in Southern Burma in the earlier centuries.²²

A first glance at the map may occasion surprise that Mahāyāna influence on Burmese Buddhism was not more considerable, for China, where the Mahāyāna tradition thrived for several centuries, is just across the north east border and the Burmese themselves are a Mongolian race. A second glance, however, discovers the far distances between centres of influence. There is a sweeping borderland of mountain ranges and remote valleys, and, in the earlier centuries, the buffer state of Nanchao lay in between China and the Burmese kingdoms. The sea route from India was the easier route to Southern Burma and Indian traders and adventurers were the forerunners of Indian missionaries.

When all qualifications have been made, we must conclude that the formative tradition of Buddhism in Burma was the Hinayāna, introduced from India and nourished from Ceylon. And from the eleventh century onwards, "the stronger vitality of the Southern school completely absorbed, assimilated and obliterated the Northern school."²³

The royal encouragement given by A-naw-ra-htha was frequently echoed by later rulers. Burmese kings were styled 'great Captains of the Law,' and as late as the nineteenth century good King Mindon convened the 'Fifth Buddhist Council' at Mandalay, when the scriptures were engraved on over seven hundred tablets of marble.

²⁰ The term, Hinayāna, is sometimes regarded as disparaging. 'Southern' or 'Theravāda' Buddhism might be preferred in this connection, but it is probably less confusing to use the terms now familiar in the West.

²¹ Ray, *Southern Buddhism in Burma*, p. 92, and *Theravāda Buddhism in Burma*, pp. 180ff.

²² Ray, *Theravāda Buddhism in Burma*, pp. 88, 87; cf. Taw Sein Kho, *Census Report (Burma, 1901)*, p. 32.

²³ Taw Sein Kho, *ibid.*, p. 32.

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● 175 But Burmese kings were not always good. The monasteries which became centres of community life in village after village have to be pictured more often against a dark background of marauding armies, political feud and violent revolt. This chequered history gives point to the suggestion that Burma owes its civilisation and 'the preservation of ... moral and mental balance' very largely to the Buddhist Order which persisted and grew apace through all vicissitudes.³³ Within the Order, there was a remarkable degree of discipline, upheld by a *Thāthanābaing* or Burmese Arch-Abbot. There was also a remarkable unanimity. Although there were different schools and parties, it is significant that there is little, if any, hint of doctrinal controversy. If there had been any considerable impact of Mahāyāna interpretation, we should surely have heard more about it. What, on the contrary, is much more evident, is the continued impact of Ceylon. Perhaps the most serious division was occasioned by a claim that it was necessary to resort to Ceylon to maintain the legitimate 'line of descent'.³⁴ There were, it is true, schismatics. Non-conformist Paramata sects decried the Order and taught the existence of an immanent Divine Being, the *Shwe Nyan Daw*, a belief which may reflect either Mahāyāna or Hindu influence. By and large, however the dominating religious and cultural force was Hinayāna Buddhism for eight centuries without interruption. We have therefore good reason for beginning a study of Southern Buddhism in a country which has been so deeply impressed by its influence.

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121 There is also a personal reason. It was in Burma, some twenty years ago, that my own acquaintance with Buddhism began. It was during discussions with monks and laymen there that I began to think that Nirvana was the ultimate religious term of their faith — the term which symbolised the consummation of their doctrine, practice and aspiration. And the mode of expression of this Nirvana symbol seemed to me significant, not only for my Buddhist friends, but for all concerned with the study of religion and life.

³³ J. A. Stewart, "Note on Some Authorities for the History of Burma," *J.B.R.S.*, xiii (1923), p. 75.

³⁴ M. H. Bode, *Pali Literature of Burma*, chap. II, p. 19.

Maung Htin Aung

CUSTOMARY LAW IN BURMA

• 175 THERE WERE PEOPLE living in the fertile valley of the Irrawaddy some three-thousand years ago, but we have very little information regarding them. It is known, however, that they used a special type of stone tool, they were acquainted with the rudiments of agriculture, and they had certain affinities with the stone-age people of those regions which are now known to us as Assam and Java. But some eighteen-hundred years ago, the Tibeto-Burman tribes appeared on the scene. They came from the eastern slopes of the mountains of Tibet, and their route into Burma was down the rivers Irrawaddy and Salween. Of those new people, the most important were the Pyus and the Burmese. The Pyus were probably the spear-head of the migration, and in any case, they arrived before the Burmese. Unlike similar migrations of early people, the Tibeto-Burman tribes did not come in search of fresh sources of supply of food. Instead they were seeking to preserve their freedom. Their original homeland was not unfertile, and they had evolved a culture of their own; but now their nearest neighbors, the Chinese, becoming organized and powerful, were harassing them, and they were fleeing southward to unknown lands to preserve their freedom and independence. It was a perilous journey. They came in groups, and it took them one or two centuries before they could settle in the valley of the Irrawaddy. They brought with them to their new home their own democratic tribal organization—and their fierce love of freedom. They brought also their own customary law.

000 Since those remote times, the Burmese customary law has

692 original and appellate jurisdiction. These officers were execu-
631 tive officers under the crown, but when they sat as judges in
their respective courts, they were judges in the full sense of the
term, for they were free of all executive control. Finally there
[643] was the Supreme Court. This final court of appeal consisted of
the king as the president, the crown prince as the vice-presi-
dent, the four chief ministers, and their four deputies. The
king, however, attended only on rare occasions, and thus the
crown prince usually presided over the court. The law that
these courts administered and interpreted was the customary
694 law of the Burmese people. One special feature of the courts
[693] was their attempt to settle the case before actually trying it.
Lawyers, who were attached to the courts as officers, although
their fees were payable by the litigants, also endeavored to
conciliate the contending parties. Often the parties decided to
refer their suit to an arbitrator. There was no right of appeal
from the decision of an arbitrator, on the ground that the
arbitrator was chosen by the contending parties themselves.
When a suit had been heard and decided, the successful party
offered a dish of pickled tea to the other party, and if the latter
accepted, the parties were deemed to have been reconciled,
and there could be no appeal from the decision of the court.
The refusal of the unsuccessful party to accept the offered dish
of pickled tea served as his notice of appeal.

671 Burmese history, like the history of many countries, re-
[178] cords rebellions, invasions, and violent struggles for power,
177 but the development of Burmese customary law has been
175 singularly free from catastrophes and sudden changes. There
has never been a revolution in the Burmese customary law.
However, the law in the course of its long history experienced
three great impacts with the outside world. The first was the
impact of Hindu jurisprudence, second was the impact of
Buddhism, and the third was the impact of English law as the
result of the British conquest of the country towards the end
of the nineteenth century.

Some of my colleagues of this conference have already

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spoken on the impact of Hindu thought and culture on the countries of Southeast Asia. The Hindu expansion overseas was well underway by the second and third centuries after Christ, and Hindu ideas and Hindu philosophies were beginning to remold the native patterns of belief and culture in Southeast Asia. In Burma, however, only the coastal region fell under Hindu influence. The Pyus by the fifth century had founded their kingdom of Prome, then situated only a few miles away from the sea, at the mouth of the Irrawaddy. The Mons, who belonged to the Mon-Khmer tribes that had settled in the regions now known as Thailand and Indo-China, had entered Lower Burma from the east, and their kingdom of Thaton, also then on the sea, seemed to have become powerful by the fifth century, about the same time as Prome. These two cities, Prome and Thaton, probably first became important as ports of call for Hindu merchant ships sailing between India and Malaya and Java, but even in those two kingdoms, Hindu influence was not strong. Thus Burma is the one country in Southeast Asia which was not Hinduized. By the eighth century after Christ, the Irrawaddy Delta was quickly forming, and Prome became farther away from the sea; the kingdom seemed to have declined rapidly, and the Pyus began to merge with the Burmese, who had now founded their kingdom at Pagan in Upper Burma. In the eleventh century, the Burmese made their kingdom strong enough to conquer and destroy the kingdom of Thaton. The Burmese were now supreme in the land. 677
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But the conquest of Thaton opened the outer world beyond the seas to the Burmese. From the conquered Mons the Burmese became acquainted with Hindu literature and with Buddhist scriptures. Burmese society and Burmese law now experienced the double impact of Hinduism and Buddhism, but, of course, by that time, Hindu power in Southeast Asia was a spent force. Both Burmese society and Burmese law survived those two impacts. 671
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Hindu jurisprudence and Hindu legal literature had